

IMMEDIATE
9 March 2005

**'OFSTED LETTERS AND QUESTIONNAIRES TO PUPILS ARE A
STEP TOO FAR IN THE INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS' SAYS NASUWT**

Commenting on reports that OFSTED intends to issue letters on the outcome of inspections to pupils, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers and headteachers, throughout the UK said:

"NASUWT has already expressed deep concern and dismay about the recent announcement of Ofsted's intention to issue questionnaires to pupils as young as 4 years old as part of the inspection process. The inappropriateness of this will now be compounded further by the decision to issue each pupil with a letter about the outcome of the inspection.

"Engaging pupils in the learning process is, of course, important. They are entitled to be provided with opportunities to express their views and to be aware of developments within the school. Schools already facilitate this through their routine working practices including individual pupil reviews, mentoring sessions and parental consultations.

"Ofsted's role should be to check that schools do engage pupils in this way not to issue simplistic and totally inappropriate questionnaires and letters which are open to misuse and abuse.

"Such strategies serve only to further undermine the authority and professionalism of teachers.

"Schools are rife with pupils who know their rights but not their responsibilities. All too frequently pupils threaten to report teachers who challenge their inappropriate behaviour.

"These letters and questionnaires will tilt even further the balance from teacher to pupil.

"Disruptive pupils undoubtedly will be grateful to OFSTED for providing them with even more opportunities to pressurise already beleaguered teachers.

"All right-minded people will regard these letters and questionnaires as a step too far in the inspection of schools."