

Five year plan – the NUT’s view

Commenting on Education Secretary Charles Clarke’s statement in the House of Commons today (Thursday 8 July), Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said:

“This five year plan is a mixture of tried and tested schemes and a leap in the dark which could be at the children’s expense.

“A three year budget for schools will provide stability and enable schools to plan ahead with greater certainty.

“I welcome Charles Clarke’s recognition that the advantages of specialist schools should apply to all secondary schools. But they must remain comprehensive schools within a comprehensive system of education.

“Also welcome is the concept of schools at the heart of their communities and the expansion of extended schools offering all round support and help to parents and to children from challenging circumstances.

“The plan to expand city academies is not based on evidence of success. The evidence is not there to justify such a radical move. No indication is given of how such schools would be protected from a rogue sponsor. Nor is there any information on how their admissions arrangements would fit with others in the same area.

“Parents will be faced with a confused and confusing array of schools rather than choice and diversity. Parents will not have the power to choose. Instead that power will lie in the hands of the governing body and the head teacher leading to selection by stealth and increased frustration and disappointment for parents.”

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