

IMMEDIATE

Thursday 16 September 2004

**NASUWT WELCOMES IMPROVEMENT IN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BUT WARNS THAT
'WAITING FOR THE GASMAN' IS STILL A PROBLEM**

Commenting on the school attendance and truancy figures released today by the DfES, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT, the largest union representing teachers throughout the UK, said:

“NASUWT welcomes the improvement in school attendance shown by today’s figures. It is clear that the national strategies are beginning to have a positive impact. Schools and teachers are to be congratulated for the efforts they have made.

“The issue of parentally condoned absence and truancy remains a problem.

“More work has to be done to discourage those parents who condone truancy by taking their children out of school for holidays, shopping trips or to ‘wait for the gasman’.

“The message has to be made clear that parents who allow their children to truant deny them access to an education and decent future.

“It must be remembered that pupil disaffection is also a factor which contributes to persistent truancy. The current review of 14-19 Education will need to address this issue.”