

IMMEDIATE

Tuesday 4 May 2004

NASUWT condemns 'arrogant, untenable and hypocritical position of NAHT'

Commenting on press reports of the ultimatum apparently given to the Government by the NAHT on funding of the Workload Agreement, **Chris Keates**, Deputy General Secretary of NASUWT (the teachers' union with 223,500 members), said:

"I do not underestimate for one minute the very real funding difficulties some schools and some LEAs experienced last year.

"NASUWT has been at the forefront of the campaign to improve the funding for education and has worked hard with the Government alongside SHA, NAHT and the LGA to seek to ensure that the problems of last year do not arise again.

"Minimum pupil funding guarantees are being given. Strategies to support schools with falling rolls are being devised. Regulations have been introduced to allow revenue and capital virement and deficit budget setting. A statutory minimum pupil guarantee has been set.

"The funding situation has improved significantly as a result of these and other strategies.

"There is, of course, more work to be done and there are undoubtedly some schools which will require specific support.

"However, there are those for whom the funding argument has provided a convenient refuge to seek to avoid implementation of the Workload Agreement.

"Numerous initiatives from local and national government, and indeed some generated by schools themselves, have been implemented over the years on the backs of teachers with little or no funding and hardly a whimper of protest from school managers and governors.

"It is just too much of a coincidence that, when for the first time in 20 years a change takes place which directly benefits the workforce, some NAHT heads claim it cannot be done.

"The truth is that some heads have finally read the Agreement's provisions and realised the days of managing teachers by exploiting a vague and all-embracing contract have gone forever.

“They need to come to terms, very quickly, with the fact that these changes are statutory. They are neither voluntary nor optional.

“Neither the regular publication of funding surveys nor making ludicrous assertions that the Agreement’s provisions will put an end to activities such as educational visits will change that fact.

“If press reports are to be believed, I am appalled that the NAHT has apparently resorted to making gratuitous insults about teachers seeking a minimal working week to shore up the increasingly arrogant, untenable and hypocritical position of the NAHT on this issue.

“Teachers working day after day in the classroom do not need lectures on hard work from those whose role is increasingly divorced from it.”

ENDS

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