

## **IMMEDIATE**

Tuesday 5 October 2004

### **'CONSERVATIVE EDUCATION POLICY CREATES THE CHILLING FEELING OF STARING INTO THE ABYSS' SAYS NASUWT**

Commenting on Tim Collin's education speech at the Conservative Party Conference in Bournemouth, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of the NASUWT, the largest union representing teachers throughout the UK, said:

"There is little new or different in the policies announced by Tim Collins today.

"The concept of a wide-ranging Teacher Protection Bill offering support on pupil indiscipline, immunity from being sued and legal protection against false and malicious allegations is an interesting idea and merits consideration.

"The commitment to remove top-up fees is also welcome.

"The recognition of the vital role played by special schools and the promise to maintain them will be well received by parents and teachers.

"However, the flawed and unworkable 'right to choose policy', which simply amounts to a more extreme version of the failed grant maintained schools strategy of the last Conservative Government, unfortunately remains high on the agenda.

"Freedom over admissions, new schools being established at whim and teachers' pay and conditions left to the discretion of individual heads and governors, is a recipe for chaos and confusion and will not produce the excellent and equitable education service which should be the goal of any Government.

"Consequently, when reflecting on the Conservative's overall package of proposals for education, it is difficult to shake off the chilling feeling of staring into the abyss."

**ENDS**

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