

IMMEDIATE

Thursday 6 January 2005

NASUWT RESPONDS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S SPEECH TO THE NORTH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Responding to the Secretary of State's speech to the North of England Conference today, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers throughout the UK, said:

"It is gratifying that in her first major speech the Secretary of State recognises the importance of the School Workforce Agreement and the crucial role of teachers and other members of the school workforce in achieving the shared ambition of excellence for all.

"Teachers will welcome the Secretary of State's recognition that parental responsibility for their children's behaviour does not stop at the school gate. She rightly identifies the link between good behaviour and high standards.

"Whilst welcoming that her speech in the main reaffirms the current direction set by the Government for education, there are some areas which will require further discussion. In particular, the role of academies and their relationships with other local schools.

"A number of the other issues referred to by the Secretary of State, specifically the ability of popular schools to expand and the fast-tracking to foundation status, are currently the subject of consultation.

"NASUWT also welcomes the commitment shown by the Secretary of State to engage in a serious debate on extending curriculum choice for individual pupils, particularly within the context of the forthcoming 14-19 reform proposals.

"The Secretary of State has inherited an extremely successful social partnership which will be of assistance to her in addressing these challenging issues. NASUWT looks forward to progressing these matters in the context of constructive and positive dialogue."

ENDS

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