

**NUT reaction to Queen's speech**

Commenting on the Government's legislative plans laid out in the Queen's Speech, Steve Sinnott, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said:

"Government plans for short, sharper focused inspections has had a mixed reception from teachers. They are particularly concerned at the concentration on English, maths and science to the detriment of other subjects taught in schools.

"Their greatest concern remains the condemnation of schools with phrases such as 'in special measures' and having 'significant weaknesses'. Instead of helping schools to overcome problems, such an approach can push them into a spiral of decline as teachers leave and parents withdraw their children.

"The Government would be well advised to move to an approach which sees schools experiencing difficulties as being 'schools in need of additional support'. A more positive approach would promote rather than undermine schools and their staff.

"I am particularly concerned at the Government's plans to require education authorities to invite proposals from commercial providers where new or replacement schools are being proposed. This directly contradicts the Government's view that schools should be at the centre of their communities and opens the way for unaccountable private providers to control our education system.

"Academies are of unproven value. More importantly, serious questions have been raised at the way some are being run and the extent to which they are selecting pupils rather than serving the local community.

"The government should think again on this proposal."

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Pr.75/04

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