

IMMEDIATE

Wednesday 21 July 2004

'Fundamentally flawed funding system needs radical reform'

Commenting on the Audit Commission's Report on the school funding crisis in 2003, **Chris Keates, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT** (the teachers' union representing 223,500 serving teachers), said:

"The Report vindicates the position NASUWT has maintained consistently that there was no widespread funding crisis. There were, however, some schools and LEAs which had particular difficulties and these should not be underestimated.

"The Report highlights the absence of reliable, up-to-date information about school budgets and the increasing, substantial balances held by schools.

"It is a disgraceful state of affairs that huge amounts of public money are apparently not being properly tracked and are sitting in unproductive school balances. This is the inevitable consequence of the policies of successive governments to give individual schools ever-increasing levels of autonomy.

"The Audit Commission is, however, wrong to criticise the Government for introducing minimum guarantees and transitional funding arrangements. Such strategies are essential to protect schools from the vagaries and variations of the current funding mechanism.

"Until this fundamentally flawed system is radically reformed it will continue to perpetuate funding inequalities, spawn real or exaggerated funding crises and distort and undermine the fact that education is receiving the highest level of investment for many years."

...ENDS...

Further:

Chris Keates Acting GS Office: 0121 453 6150 Home: 0121 475 4016 Mobile: 07966 202403
Jerry Bartlett Acting DGS Office: 0121 453 6150 Home: 01562 742498 Mobile: 07966 202407

PRESS OFFICE: 020 7420 9670