

## **IMMEDIATE**

Friday 30 July 2004

### **NASUWT welcomes development of national database on exclusions**

Commenting on the publication of DfES statistics for the Summer term 2003 on fixed and permanent exclusions and the reasons for schools taking this action, **Chris Keates**, Acting General Secretary of NASUWT (the union representing 223,500 serving teachers), said:

“At Annual Conference in April 2004, NASUWT called for the development of a national database to record the number of exclusions and the reasons for schools taking such action.

“These figures are the first to include more detailed and extensive data. I welcome the fact that the Government has now recognised the importance and potential benefit of collecting this information nationally.

“The level of assaults on teachers and pupil-on-pupil violence are of deep concern. However, it is evident that schools are not tolerating such behaviour and are dealing with it decisively through exclusion procedures.

“The evidence of under-reporting in the returns is highly regrettable but unfortunately comes as no surprise. Fear of being stigmatised as ‘failing’ if they admit to incidents of violence or use of exclusion causes some schools to suppress information.

“Such considerations may be understandable but cannot be allowed to go unchallenged, particularly as the recording and reporting of assaults is a legal duty.

“Far from being condemned for highlighting serious incidents of violence and taking action such as exclusion to combat them, schools should be congratulated for taking a strong stand to maintain high standards of behaviour and for protecting the school community from the small minority of pupils who behave in an unacceptable manner.

“It is essential that we utilise fully the opportunity this information presents to consider what additional action is needed to assist schools in combating violence and enhancing safety.

“Strategies to ensure that schools and LEAs record and report relevant information also need to be determined.

“NASUWT will, therefore, be requesting that the DfES statistics are on the agenda for the meetings of the DfES/Home Office School Security Working Party and the DfES Advisory Group on Behaviour scheduled to take place in the next few weeks.”

**ENDS**

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