

EMBARGO: 0930 hours
Tuesday 24 August 2004

Primary school achievement undermined by Government's unrealistic targets

Commenting on the end of Key Stage test results published by the Department for Education and Skills today, Tuesday 24 August, Steve Sinnott, NUT General Secretary, said:

“Instead of celebrating primary schools’ achievement in numeracy and literacy, the target system has meant the Government has shot itself in the foot. Inevitably those hostile to the success of our primary schools point to the fact that the Government’s original targets have not been achieved rather than to the continuing improvement in pupil performance.

“The Government must learn a long overdue lesson: it has got to take defining national measures of performance out of the political arena. There is a strong argument for the establishment of an independent unit which would sample achievement in the basics without being tied to crude national targets.

“The question still has to be asked: why is the Government continuing to impose these uninformative and damaging tests on pupils in England? Teachers regard these tests as disruptive of children’s education taking up an unreasonable amount of time and placing an additional workload on teachers without benefit to pupils, parents or teachers. The Government should follow the example of Wales and get rid of these educationally unsound tests, performance tables and crude national targets.”

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PR51/04