JBN2707/CKS/BF

Jackie Bawden
Director of National Tests
National Assessment Agency
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
83 Piccadilly
London W1J 8QA

27 July 2004

Dear Jackie

Key Stage 3 National Tests

A significant number of concerns and problems have been raised by NASUWT members about this year's Key Stage 3 tests.

These include:

- marking inaccuracies as a result of poor collation of scores where more than one marker has marked different parts of the test;
- the late or non-arrival of pupil scores leading to serious problems for teachers in checking the scripts, sending off appeals and reporting results to parents;
- pupil test scripts being returned to schools without a calculation of final totals and;
- poor quality marking of scripts with highly questionable decisions about the scoring of individual responses resulting in a significant increasing the number of appeals.

I am sure you will agree that the disruption and additional workload pressures this has caused for teachers is unacceptable. This situation has undermined the confidence of teachers in the National Assessment Agency's ability to manage national assessment effectively. Urgent action is required to identify the causes of these problems and to put in place robust procedures to ensure that the private contractors responsible for direct test administration do not repeat the same mistakes in future.

I am aware that a meeting of the National Assessment Agency and the teacher associations is planned for 24 September, however, I believe that the problems highlighted merit an urgent review and that proposals for action by the National Assessment Agency should be forthcoming as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Chris Keates
Acting General Secretary