

## VITAL ROLE OF TEACHERS CELEBRATED

Teachers play a vital role in ensuring children and young people, irrespective of background or income fulfil their potential, **Dan McCarthy, NASUWT National President**, said today.

Mr McCarthy, a teacher of English from Essex, said teachers had to fight to give them the conditions where they could deliver an education to all children that was fun, fulfilling and engaging.

But they were being hampered from doing so because of the impact of workload and the monitoring and surveillance culture in schools which was also damaging teacher's mental health.

Society also had to work harder to foster and support teachers and ensure their wellbeing, he told the **Annual Conference of the NASUWT – The Teachers' Union**, being held in Birmingham.

He told delegates: "We change lives. People do remember their inspirational teachers. People do love what their teacher did for them.

"Together we must continue to fight to give teachers the conditions where they can give our future generations an educational experience that respects who they are, where they come from and what they can and do achieve, as well as one that is fun, fulfilling and engaging."

But increasing levels of observation or "surveillance" of many teachers by their heads was often designed not to support but to crush them.

He said: "Intrinsically, teaching is a stressful profession, but it has become more stressful. There is more monitoring, no doubt about it.

"There is more 'surveillance'. Surveillance that is not positive and developmental but punitive and crushing.

"I have been told by colleagues that they are not just thinking of quitting teaching but that they have considered taking their own lives."

Mr McCarthy said teaching was the "foundation for civilised society" but suggested the curriculum was too narrow and the focus of the curriculum could be in the wrong place.

He said: "We need an education system and a curriculum that gives teachers and children a voice.

"We need Art, Music, Drama, CDT. We need an English curriculum that is about creativity and expression, not about memory and whether 'after' is a preposition or a coordinating conjunction. We need subject criteria which encourage speaking and listening and encourage the reading of novels such as To Kill a Mockingbird, which are an essential part of an education that develops children as rounded individuals."