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**PM entitled to trumpet his achievements in science, and  
his acknowledgement of serious challenges must be acted on**

Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) today welcomed the recognition by Prime Minister Tony Blair that there is a long way to go on science policy before the UK's scientific future will be as strong as it could be.

"Not surprisingly, the Prime Minister spent some time in his big speech today telling us about the good things his Government has done for science," said Dr Peter Cotgreave, Director of CaSE, "and he is entitled to take credit for the fact that investment in the nation's science base has risen sharply on his watch, when it fell under his predecessors".

"But more importantly in a lecture called Our Nation's Future, he said he recognises that there are some very serious challenges to come.

"In particular, we at CaSE are not convinced that the measures he mentioned will do enough to remedy the crucial problems in the education system – a quarter of schools have no qualified physics teacher, so they are trying to do the job of inspiring children about the subject with their hands tied behind their backs.

"And when I asked him about the fact that various universities are closing their science departments, he agreed that there is a potential problem with the funding formula for higher education, and he said his Government was investigating the matter.

"Let's just hope these issues can be addressed quickly enough to generate the next generation of scientists to do the exciting research that Tony Blair rightly said was necessary for major political challenges like climate change, and which he trumpeted as being possible with the enhanced levels of funding that his Government have provided."

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