

Curriculum for Excellence needs to be 'reset'

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The Scottish Conservatives are today calling for a 'reset' of the SNP's Curriculum for Excellence programme.

In a paper published today, the party makes five key recommendations to improve the delivery of CfE – following growing criticism of the SNP's education plans.

A poll of teachers by Ipsos Mori at the start of the year found that schools are facing a rise in disruption because pupils are switching off from the new curriculum, and see the National 4 qualification as not worth their while.

Another survey found that staff at Education Scotland – the government agency charged with improving the roll out of CfE – do not believe the organisation has been capable of delivering reforms successfully.

Today, the Scottish Conservatives are calling on the SNP to get a grip of Scotland's education system before another generation of Scottish schoolchildren is let down.

The paper follows extensive consultation with teachers, education experts and parents across Scotland.

In her conclusion, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith MSP declares:

“Throughout all the interviews and consultations we undertook, there was general agreement that the principles which underpin Curriculum for Excellence – and which were agreed unanimously by Scotland's political parties – are sound.

“This is because there is widespread agreement that pupils should understand why they are learning something just as much as what they are learning.”

She adds: “There was also general agreement however, that the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has been fraught with problems which, in turn, have undermined its effective delivery in the classroom. There is no time to lose to get Curriculum for Excellence back on track and ensure that Scotland is, once again, leading the field in education.”

The party is proposing five recommendations to improve the delivery of the curriculum.

- Improve clarity, accountability and measurement – so parents, teachers and young people know exactly what CfE is expected to deliver.
- Address the teacher shortage crisis by opening up new routes into the classroom and reform teacher training to boost standards.
- Slash the excessive guidance and paperwork issued to teachers to ensure that CfE has the appropriate balance between learning core knowledge and new skills.
- Reform Scotland’s Education Agencies – Education Scotland should not be responsible for curriculum development, and for inspecting it.
- Extend school autonomy so head-teachers are free to make decisions to help drive up standards in their own school community.

Ms Smith adds today: “Simply put, Curriculum for Excellence needs to be re-set. Under the SNP, its implementation has been muddled at best and chaotic at worst.

“There is no point having a new curriculum if pupils are not getting the basics in literacy and numeracy and teachers are left confused by what they’re supposed to be doing. As the evidence shows, this will only lead to disruption in the classroom as pupils switch off.

“The SNP must get a grip. Nicola Sturgeon said education was her top priority after she became First Minister – only to spend most of her time obsessing over independence. In 2018, it is time she honoured her promise.”

You can read a copy of the paper, ‘A new blueprint for the Curriculum for Excellence’, here:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Blueprint-for-Curriculum-for-Excellence.pdf>