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The SNP has been accused of placing education “on the slow train”, despite the party claiming it’s a number one priority.

At First Minister’s Questions today, Ruth Davidson asked Nicola Sturgeon why a key education strategy had been delayed amid claims of ministers wanting to “chew over” additional submissions.

This is despite Ms Sturgeon making repeated threats about holding another divisive independence referendum, the latest coming this week at the David Hume Institute.

Ruth pointed to the example of education charity Hometown, which has asked the Scottish Government for two years about the possibility of piloting community-run schools.

They said this could be done without interfering with wider reform plans, but have received nothing back from ministers.

In a letter to education secretary John Swinney, the organisation said: “We have lost patience. This whole process has been a series of false dawns.

“This is really not a great demonstration of meaningful engagement with stakeholders or a good start in trying to empower teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education.”

Ruth accused the SNP of paying lip service to education reforms, while privately having no intention to take them forward.

**Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

“When it comes to education reform, the SNP government is kicking the can down the road.

“At the same time that she is ramping up the rhetoric on a second independence referendum, Nicola Sturgeon is putting education on the back burner.

“People fear that the Scottish Government has already made up its mind on much-needed education reforms, and that decision is they’re not going to

happen.

“A year-and-a-half ago the First Minister staked her reputation on reforming Scotland’s schools.

“But since then literacy standards have slipped, numeracy has decreased, the Curriculum for Excellence continues to fail and now her education secretary is stalling.

“The continued delays over education reform show the SNP’s claim that it is a priority is quite simply false.”

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**To see the letter from Hometown to the Scottish Government, visit:**

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/doc00122920161122150512.pdf>