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The Scottish Government has spent more time debating the constitution than key devolved issues like education, health and justice combined, it has been revealed.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson attacked the SNP's record on education after it emerged this week more than 16 per cent of S2 pupils can't write properly.

She also pointed to evidence at this week's education committee showing trainee teachers receive just one week of tuition on teaching literacy.

And it's the SNP's obsession with independence which is contributing to a drop in standards across Scotland's classrooms, Ruth said, despite claims from Nicola Sturgeon that it's her "priority".

Since the summer, the Scottish Government has spent more than 45 hours debating the constitution at Holyrood.

That's four times more than education, and compares to around six hours on health, eight hours on justice, and just three hours on transport.

Ruth also criticised the SNP for presiding over a fall in inspections, adding those tasked with checking standards in the class-room had been instead focusing on delivering the controversial Curriculum for Excellence.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"We liked to pride ourselves in Scotland that our education system was one of the best in the world.

"But after 10 years of an SNP government, we can do so no longer.

"Too many of our children can't read or write properly and the situation is only getting worse.

"In addition, we don't have enough people entering teacher training.

"Those trainee teachers who are in place are now telling us they aren't equipped to educate pupils to a reasonable standard.

“That is a shameful record, and it’s one of an SNP government which has spent more time debating the constitution than anything else.

“I was glad to hear Nicola Sturgeon pours over Scottish Conservative press releases.

“Perhaps if she wants us to stop mentioning independence, she could send one of her own taking the threat of another referendum off the table.”

Below is a range of topics initiated by the Scottish Government since June, broken down by hours. For a more comprehensive breakdown, contact the Scottish Conservative press office.

Constitution – 45.25 hours

Education – 10.25 hours

Health – 6.25 hours

Justice – 7.75 hours

Transport – 3.5 hours

On Tuesday, damning figures revealed the state of Scottish education:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/05/figures-show-snps-shameful-performance-on-education/>

And yesterday, trainee teachers revealed the lack of training on literacy and numeracy they receive:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/05/trainees-expose-the-gaps-in-scotlands-teacher-training-programme-2/>