

Ruth: It's time to focus on our schools

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The Scottish Conservatives will today set out fresh ideas to improve literacy and numeracy in schools – following growing evidence that Scotland's standards are slipping.

On a visit to the Enchanted Forest nursery school in East Renfrewshire, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson warned SNP Ministers that they must put aside their obsession with a second referendum – and focus instead of delivering real reform in schools.

Her visit comes ahead of a Scottish Conservative debate in the Scottish Parliament today, when the party will highlight shocking evidence that teacher trainees are not getting support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The Scottish Conservatives are currently conducting a review into the operation of Curriculum for Excellence. To boost literacy and numeracy skills, the party is calling for:

- Teacher trainees to sit literacy and numeracy tests at the start and end of their course to identify weaknesses and help trainees improve their skills.
- The creation of a new independent Inspectorate to be established to carry out rigorous quality checks on primary and secondary schools.
- Government to set a clear target to ensure all children read well by the age of 11 – as proposed by Save the Children.
- More focus on literacy and numeracy at nursery level – particularly for children from low-income families.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said today:

“While Nicola Sturgeon has pressed ahead with her independence obsession, a generation of school-children has been left behind. People across Scotland have had enough. We need action now.

“When we are training teachers, we need to ensure they know how to pass on good literacy and numeracy skills to children.

“We need to start at nursery – because we know that's when many children from low income families fall behind.

“And to ensure that school standards improve, it's time for an independent inspection body to be formed so we can flag up problems early.

“These are the basics you’d expect any government to act upon. Yet the SNP has spent so much of its time on the constitution, it has left the day job behind.

“It’s time to send the SNP a message on June 8th – enough of your divisive referendum, it is time to focus on our schools.”