

# Scottish Conservatives propose major reform of key element of Curriculum for Excellence

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The Scottish Conservatives have today called for a complete reform of National 4 so that all pupils studying at this level will be required to sit exams in both basic literacy and numeracy.

At present, pupil assessment in National 4 is based only on teacher judgment and does not allow pupils to gain formal qualifications in the basic skills – something which many parents, teachers and employers believe is a serious flaw within Curriculum for Excellence.

Four years on from Nicola Sturgeon’s request to “judge me on education” the recent SQA results show that Scottish education has “gone backwards” on her watch and urgent reform is necessary.

Scottish Conservative Shadow Education Secretary Liz Smith has said that National 4 should be completely reformed so that all pupils are required to sit examinations in basic literacy and numeracy.

The Scottish Conservatives are also calling for:

- The SNP to reverse their decision to take Scotland out of the TIMSS and PIRLS measurements.
- Education Scotland to no longer be the “judge and jury” in charge of both curriculum development and inspection.
- Full clarity within curriculum guidance.

**Scottish Conservative Shadow Education Secretary Liz Smith said:**

“Four years ago, Nicola Sturgeon asked us to “judge her on education.”

“That statement now has a very hollow ring to it. No-one can pretend that all is well in Scotland’s schools. Four years on, the recent SQA results show that Scottish education has gone backwards.

“The pass rates for Higher and Advanced Higher are the lowest since the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) was introduced and there has been a fall in

Higher pass rates for four consecutive years.

“That is a trend and a very worrying one, especially when the Higher is supposed to be the “gold standard” of Scottish education.

“Our pupils and schools are being let down by the SNP’s botched implementation of the curriculum and its qualifications system.

“Above all, National 4 should be completely reformed with new exams in basic literacy and numeracy that ensure every pupil leaves school able to read, write and count to a high level.

“A renewed focus on core skills in literacy and numeracy at the Broad General Education (BGE) phase and National 4 level would be far more complementary to vocational training and better prepare young people for the world of work.”