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The Scottish Conservatives have criticised the SNP over headteacher recruitment, suggesting it had “categorically failed” in its attempt to encourage teachers to take up headship.

An investigation from Tes Scotland put a spotlight on the sharp rise in the number of headteachers placed in charge of one or more schools.

It revealed that just under 200 teachers have been asked to run numerous schools at the same time.

Overall, 190 of 2,000 nationwide headteachers were in charge of more than one school – a rise of just over 50 per cent compared with 2010.

In 2010, it was revealed that 17 councils had introduced shared headships – this year however, 23 of Scotland’s 32 councils are using these arrangements.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“This will be a matter of great concern to parents across Scotland.

“It is a clear sign that the SNP is categorically failing in its attempts to get more people into the teaching profession and to take up headship.

“Other than in very remote rural communities, this is completely unsustainable to have heads needing to be in charge of a number of schools.

“It is grossly unfair on the pupils. The absence can affect direction and strategy and can have a negative impact on staff morale.

“Staff shortages have become a major issue under this SNP government. It is completely unacceptable and speaks volumes about its promise to make education the number one priority.”

Tes Scotland release:

<https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/scottish-schools-spending-three-years-trying-recruit-headteachers>