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- Sturgeon admits Scotland going backwards on education

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The First Minister has today admitted that education standards are falling under the SNP, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

In an interview on the BBC Andrew Marr show, Nicola Sturgeon said she was “not denying” that levels of literacy and numeracy were on the decline in Scotland.

The SNP leader also said she is holding to her promise to be judged on her record on education, and pledged improvements by the next parliament in 2021.

The latest Scottish Survey for Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) showed a rise in the percentage of pupils who are functionally illiterate from 7% to 16% in the last four years.

Fewer than half of S2 pupils in Scotland were performing well in writing, down from 64% in 2012.

The figures also showed that Scotland’s attainment gap continues to exist, with pupils from the least deprived areas outperforming those from the most deprived areas at all stages – with the gap similar to that seen in 2012.

Scottish Conservative education spokeswoman Liz Smith MSP said:

“Today’s response from the First Minister that she is ‘not denying’ collapsing standards in literacy and numeracy is a tacit admission of failure.

“The recent SSLN statistics made it clear that the SNP government is not doing enough to address the problems in basic literacy.

“There also remains a persistent gap between pupils from the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas.

“After ten years of SNP control over Scottish education, it is simply not good enough for Nicola Sturgeon to say that improvements will be made by 2021.

“Scottish children cannot afford to wait until the next parliament for things to get better.

“It is time for the SNP to put its obsession with independence to one side and get on with tackling its supposed top priority of improving education.”