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First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been attacked for a decade of failure on education – days after predecessor Alex Salmond dismissed problems as “just one statistic”.

A number of figures were highlighted by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, including that one in five youngsters leave school functionally illiterate and Scotland’s schools slipping down global league tables.

She added that these failings have taken place on the SNP’s watch – having been in power since 2007 – and that thousands of lives had been impacted.

However, at First Minister’s Questions today, Ms Sturgeon stood by her record on education, again promising – despite being in charge for a decade – things would improve.

Thousands of teachers have been lost in Scotland over the last 10 years, Ruth said, while 16 per cent of training places in certain key subjects remain unfilled.

And she added that, as people vote in local government elections tomorrow, the SNP should remember that it promised education would be a priority ahead of everything else.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The SNP has been in sole charge of education for a decade, and these failings are inexcusable.

“One in five children leave school functionally illiterate, the proportion of youngsters performing well in numeracy is falling, and pupils’ ability in science is in ‘pronounced and sustained’ decline according to experts.

“These are problems of the SNP’s making – thanks to the nationalists, our schools can no longer be classed as world-leading.

“And it’s not just one statistic, as Alex Salmond claimed – it’s a 10-year record of failure.

“The SNP may say its priority is education, but the last decade tells a

different story entirely.”