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John Swinney must order an urgent review into the decline in subject choice in Scottish schools, the Scottish Conservatives have said today.

It comes as a study by Professor Jim Scott reveals that the number of S4 pupils studying and passing French has fallen by almost two thirds since Scotland's new curriculum was introduced.

SQA figures released earlier this week confirm that there have been significant declines between 2017 and 2018 in the number of entries for modern languages across National 4, National 5 and Advanced Higher.

The figures also show that there have also been drops in the number of entries for the five main "STEM" subjects (biology, chemistry, computing, maths and physics) in National 4 and Higher.

The falls in entries for these subjects are worse than the decline in overall entries between 2017 and 2018.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"Scottish schools were once known for the broad based education they provided to pupils.

"Under the SNP, that gold-standard reputation is being squandered.

"The decline in subject choice is one of the biggest concerns being raised by parents across Scotland and it's something we've been raising with the SNP for months.

"John Swinney needs to get a grip and order an immediate review into what is going on.

"The real worry is that pupils from poorer areas are losing out the most.

"Nicola Sturgeon has made cutting the attainment gap her key priority – but how can children from poorer backgrounds progress if subjects in key areas

aren't on offer?

"The SNP's response to the fall in standards this summer has been to cancel its own Education Bill designed to boost standards.

"That is despite the fact that John Swinney and Nicola Sturgeon repeatedly said the bill would be flagship legislation designed to raise standards.

"We cannot allow another generation of pupils to be let down by the SNP's complacency."