

Holyrood to be given chance to scrap p1 testing

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MSPs will have the chance next week to formally vote against the mandatory testing of primary 1 schools pupils, it has been revealed.

The Scottish Conservatives will use their party business slot on Wednesday to suggest ending the practice, which has been widely criticised by parents and teaching unions.

With all opposition parties opposed to p1 testing, it is likely that a majority in the Scottish Parliament will vote to scrap the assessments, even if the SNP sticks to its guns.

It will then be up to the nationalist government whether or not to accept the will of the Scottish Parliament.

Nicola Sturgeon was given the chance to publicly u-turn on p1 testing today at First Minister's Questions, but refused to do so.

The Scottish Conservatives remain supportive of testing at later ages in school.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"This is a chance for opposition parties to come together to end the SNP's system of p1 tests which have not only proved difficult to administer but which are not providing the most meaningful educational outcomes for five-year-olds.

"We firmly believe that there has to be a different approach in p1 compared to what happens further on in school.

"The Scottish Conservatives will use our party business to demonstrate the educational evidence in this regard and why it has led to so much concern among teachers.

"We remain fully supportive of testing in schools among older children.

"Standardised tests at p4, p7 and s3 should be a key part of educational development and the monitoring of schools' overall progress.

“At present, there is too much scope for schools to avoid the standardised approach further up the school, thereby making it very difficult to measure what progress is being made within the Curriculum for Excellence.

“This weakness cannot be consistent with narrowing the attainment gap.

“We believe all parties are united in their desire to see standards raised and that the standards must reflect the best educational interests of each pupil at every age in their school career.”