

Number of pupils requiring additional support dramatically rises

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The number of school pupils in Scotland requiring additional support has more than doubled in six years, a report to Holyrood's education committee will reveal on Wednesday.

The report will show that the total number of pupils in need of additional support has seen a sharp 153 per cent rise since 2010.

Among the highest number of additional support was the need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulty assistance.

A total of 36,030 students have been revealed to require this form of support, a striking increase from 1 per 1,000 students to 4.1 per 1,000 since 2002.

The report also reveals that 2,044 young carers required additional support during 2016.

The worrying statistics have intensified criticism of the SNP on additional support needs, after a report released in January revealed that the 2,896 additional support teachers employed was the lowest since 2007.

With these figures revealing the ever-increasing demand for additional support teachers across Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives are now calling for answers from the SNP as to why it has continually slashed the number of support teachers.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"The SNP has repeatedly declared that education is a major priority, but its actions suggest otherwise.

"The growth in the number of pupils being identified with additional support needs has been accompanied by a fall in the number of teachers with the relevant specialist skills.

"Because of this fall in additional support teachers, many pupils are being badly let down.

"There is a very important debate to be had about the effectiveness of

mainstreaming for some of our most vulnerable children, but that will not happen if there are too few teachers with the relevant skills.”

Copy of the education report papers:

http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Meeting%20Papers/ESCtteePublicPapers20170301.pdf