

Schools 'must focus on core subjects' to improve CfE

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Scotland's curriculum must be reset to once again focus on core and traditional subjects, the Scottish Conservatives will say tomorrow (Wednesday).

As part of a drive to stop the decline in the country's education system, the party will argue that knowledge-based learning should be seen as equally important as a skills-based approach.

That means that as well as focusing on English and Maths, young people should be able to have good quality choices across science, the social sciences and the arts not only to boost their own prospects, but to meet the needs of Scotland's economy.

Shadow education secretary Liz Smith will say the focus should not only be on traditional subjects themselves, but also the core knowledge which defines them.

The issue will be raised as part of Scottish Conservative business in Holyrood.

The party's motion will welcome the Scottish Government's decision to review of the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence, but also adds that a "full review of broad general education and how it articulates with the senior phase" should be launched.

The call comes following revelations that education secretary John Swinney ordered officials to investigate Scotland's falling exam performance, despite saying publicly there were no real issues.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"There is a significant mismatch between the SNP's current rhetoric about education standards and what is actually happening in our schools.

"John Swinney knows fine well, and so do his officials and education experts across the country, that all is not well in the education system.

"In our view, and in the view of most parents and employers, there has to be a strong attachment to core subjects in our schools if things are to improve.

"That means not just maths and English, but the arts, the sciences and social sciences too.

“This has become an issue about knowledge content and the ability of all pupils to have meaningful choices in key faculty areas, and a breadth across those disciplines which was always the main strength of Scottish education.

“It’s not so much a case of returning to an older curriculum as resetting this one.

“The SNP must realise that there is a very long way to go before Scotland can once again lead the world in education.”