

Sturgeon must embrace Teach First to address teacher shortage

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Nicola Sturgeon must introduce the successful scheme which fast tracks talented graduates into schools to address Scotland's recruitment crisis, Ruth Davidson has said.

The Scottish Conservative leader pointed to figures showing 400 graduates who'd studied in Scotland were now teaching elsewhere in the UK thanks to the Teach First initiative.

At First Minister's Questions, she added versions of the scheme were operating in 40 countries across the world but, thanks to SNP decisions, not in Scotland.

However, Ms Sturgeon refused to commit to implementing Teach First north of the border, saying she'd been talked out of it by a teacher on a visit to London.

That's the same reason she outlined 18 months ago in the Scottish Parliament, sparking accusations that she's done nothing since to remedy Scotland's teacher shortage.

Latest figures show there are 4000 fewer teachers in schools than when the SNP came to power in 2007, while 70 per cent of schools say they can't offer s4 pupils the choice of subjects they want.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"Everyone accepts that there aren't enough teachers in Scotland.

"But for reasons known only to herself, Nicola Sturgeon repeatedly refuses to implement the successful Teach First scheme.

"Hundreds of bright graduates from Scottish universities are now teaching elsewhere in the UK thanks to this initiative.

"Dozens of countries elsewhere in the world successfully use versions of this project to make sure there are enough teachers in schools.

"Yet the SNP sits on its hands. The First Minister gave me the same answers today as she did 18 months ago, and that's not good enough.

“The reality is Nicola Sturgeon has presided over a teacher recruitment crisis.

“She’s fallen asleep at the wheel on education, the response to bad test results is to take schools out the tests altogether, and when good ideas like Teach First come forward, she inexplicably knocks them back.

“It’s not enough for her just to admit these mistakes in teacher recruitment – she has to act on them too.”

For more on the Teach First scheme operating successfully elsewhere in the UK, visit:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/exodus-of-graduates-to-fast-track-teaching-programme-in-england-ff3q3z3v5>

Scotland has 4000 fewer teachers than when the SNP came to power in 2007:

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/799693/Andrew-Neil-SNP-education-cut-teachers-Scotland-BBC-Daily-Politics>