

Sturgeon must embrace Teach First to address teacher shortage

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- Sturgeon must embrace Teach First to address teacher shortage

18 May 2017



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-teacher-s-Scotland-BBC-Daily-Politics>

[A manifesto that delivers for Scotland](#)

18 May 2017



Secretary of state for Scotland David Mundell has hailed today’s UK Conservative manifesto as a plan “that delivers for Scotland”.

The manifesto provides backing for Scotland’s vital energy sector – including plans to create a world-leading decommissioning industry in the North Sea and a commitment to remote island wind development.

Key announcements include a new Borderlands Growth deal to boost prosperity in the south of Scotland.

And, for Scotland’s capital city, the manifesto commits a future Conservative government to mark the 70th anniversary of the Edinburgh Festival by developing a new Edinburgh Concert Hall.

A re-elected Conservative Government will also ensure that one of the offices of the new British Business Bank will be located in Edinburgh.

In addition, the manifesto provides a key pledge for Scottish farmers – with a commitment to ensure the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament.

Secretary of state for Scotland David Mundell said:

“From the Borders to the North Sea, this manifesto delivers for Scotland.

“It shows that a re-elected Conservative government will continue to ensure that Scotland benefits from its membership of the United Kingdom.

“The more Scottish Conservative MPs we elect on Thursday, the more MPs we will have at the heart of Westminster able to deliver even more for Scotland.

“All this is underpinned by the key commitment in today’s manifesto – and that is to say no to the SNP’s reckless plan for a second referendum so Scotland can move on, together.”

Scotland in the UK manifesto

Borderlands Growth Deal (pg. 33)

- “Building on the City and Growth deals we have signed across Scotland, we will bring forward a Borderlands Growth Deal, including all councils on both sides of the border, to help secure prosperity in southern Scotland.”

Support for remote island wind (pg. 22)

- We will “support the development of wind projects in the remote islands of Scotland, where they will directly benefit local communities.”

Protecting farming incomes (pg. 26)

- “We will continue to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support until the end of the parliament.”

North Sea industry support (pg. 21-22)

- “We will ensure that the sector continues to play a critical role in our economy and domestic energy supply, supporting further investment in the UK’s natural resources. We will continue to support the industry and build on the unprecedented support already provided to the oil and gas sector.”

Scotland at the heart of the industrial strategy (pg. 22)

- “While there are very significant reserves still in the North Sea, it is expected to be the first major oil and gas basin in the world to decommission fully, and we will take advantage of that to support the development of a world-leading decommissioning industry.”

Supporting a new arts venue in Edinburgh (pg. 25)

- “In this 70th Anniversary Year of the Edinburgh Festival we will support the development of the new Edinburgh Concert Hall, reaffirming Edinburgh as the UK’s leading festival city and a cultural beacon around the globe.”

A new British Business Bank branch in Edinburgh (pg. 78)

- We will “open new offices of the British Business Bank in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester and Newport, specialising in the

local sector.”

[Labour threatens to suspend councillors who snubbed deal with the SNP](#)

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- Labour threatens to suspend councillors who snubbed deal with the SNP

17 May 2017



Labour leader Kezia Dugdale has “shown her true colours” after threatening councillors with suspension for not doing a deal with the SNP.

Earlier today, it was confirmed that the Scottish Conservatives and Labour would form a coalition to run Aberdeen City Council.

Shortly after, Labour bosses said any councillors who signed up to this deal “will be in breach of Labour Party rules and may be suspended from the party”.

The pro-UK move by councillors in Scotland’s third biggest city is not popular with the wider party, which appears more enthusiastic for town hall deals to be done with the SNP.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Kezia Dugdale has shown her true colours.

“As soon as the SNP finally comes under pressure, she can’t wait to help them out by propping them up in local government.

“She says she’ll ‘discipline’ members who even think about working with pro-UK colleagues like the Conservatives, despite Labour and Conservatives having formed the Aberdeen City administration for almost all of her time as leader.

“She really is lost. No wonder Scottish Labour is continuing its death spiral.”

For more information, visit:

[Report confirms serious issues in teacher training](#)

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- Report confirms serious issues in teacher training

17 May 2017



A Scottish Government report has once again confirmed the serious issues facing teacher training in Scotland.

The ITE analysis report commissioned by the Scottish Government revealed a huge variation in the amount of time being set aside to teach literacy on teacher training courses.

It showed that some universities are only dedicating 4 hours respectively to the teaching of numeracy and literacy.

It backs up evidence heard by the education committee last week where several trainee teachers stated that they had only received a week's training on literacy.

The report was published ahead of a Scottish Conservative debate this afternoon that will set out new policies to improve literacy and numeracy in schools – following growing evidence that Scotland's standards are slipping.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“This is yet another damning report into the SNP's record on education.

“Even their own studies show that trainee teachers are not receiving enough training on literacy.

“With literacy rates in our schools plummeting this is simply not good enough, and it's time that the SNP took action.

“Ever since the Donaldson Report was published we've known that this was an issue, but in ten years of SNP government things are going backwards.

“Scots want to see our education system improve, and they want Nicola Sturgeon to ditch her plans for a second referendum and get back to the day job.”

A copy of the report is available [here](#).

Graph 5 on page 23 shows the number of dedicated hours to each key area.

Ruth: It's time to focus on our schools

17 May 2017



The Scottish Conservatives will today set out fresh ideas to improve literacy and numeracy in schools – following growing evidence that Scotland's standards are slipping.

On a visit to the Enchanted Forest nursery school in East Renfrewshire, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson warned SNP Ministers that they must put aside their obsession with a second referendum – and focus instead of delivering real reform in schools.

Her visit comes ahead of a Scottish Conservative debate in the Scottish Parliament today, when the party will highlight shocking evidence that teacher trainees are not getting support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The Scottish Conservatives are currently conducting a review into the operation of Curriculum for Excellence. To boost literacy and numeracy skills, the party is calling for:

- Teacher trainees to sit literacy and numeracy tests at the start and end of their course to identify weaknesses and help trainees improve their skills.
- The creation of a new independent Inspectorate to be established to carry out rigorous quality checks on primary and secondary schools.
- Government to set a clear target to ensure all children read well by the age of 11 – as proposed by Save the Children.
- More focus on literacy and numeracy at nursery level – particularly for children from low-income families.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said today:

“While Nicola Sturgeon has pressed ahead with her independence obsession, a generation of school-children has been left behind. People across Scotland have had enough. We need action now.

“When we are training teachers, we need to ensure they know how to pass on good literacy and numeracy skills to children.

“We need to start at nursery – because we know that’s when many children from low income families fall behind.

“And to ensure that school standards improve, it’s time for an independent inspection body to be formed so we can flag up problems early.

“These are the basics you’d expect any government to act upon. Yet the SNP has spent so much of its time on the constitution, it has left the day job behind.

“It’s time to send the SNP a message on June 8th – enough of your divisive referendum, it is time to focus on our schools.”