

Parliament to debate overhaul of SQA on Wednesday

After the to-ing and fro-ing around exam results last year, it is little surprise that the opposition are reviving an old argument about splitting up Education Scotland and the SQA.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats have lodged a motion for debate on Wednesday at The Scottish Parliament asking for an overhaul in the organisations owing to a lack of confidence.

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie said: "Education Scotland and the SQA's days are numbered. They have let hardworking teachers, pupils and parents down throughout this pandemic.

"At a time of disruption and worry, instead of making peoples' jobs and lives easier, they have made them harder.

"Despite months of warnings, the SQA and John Swinney teamed up to create an exams system and algorithm that actively penalised pupils from the poorest backgrounds.

"After Education Scotland previously gave teachers 20,000 pages of guidance on Curriculum for Excellence, during this pandemic they have gone to the other end of the scale and been totally absent when people needed them.

"Both of the Scottish Government's education quangos have lost the confidence of those who they are supposed to serve and

have repeatedly shown that they are not fit for purpose.

“Scottish Liberal Democrats will this week ask Parliament to overhaul them as an essential part of the recovery of education. Education Scotland and the SQA cannot be trusted with the critical job of helping the education system bounce back.”

[The motion, to be put to a vote of all MSPs on Wednesday](#) reads as follows:

Willie Rennie, Education: That the Parliament believes that the support, services and decision-making provided by Education Scotland and the SQA have not met the expectations or requirements of hardworking teachers, pupils or parents throughout the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; recalls that serious concerns existed about the performance and structure of these organisations for years before the pandemic struck, including those expressed by Parliament in its resolution on the debate on motion S5M-04920 on 29 March 2017; considers that there is compelling evidence that neither body is fit for purpose and that they have lost the confidence of teachers, pupils and parents, and therefore calls for substantial reform as part of the recovery of education, with Education Scotland separated into independent inspection and policy functions and the SQA to be grounded in the teaching profession and made more accountable, and expresses concern about the reported involvement of both organisations and the Scottish Government in the ongoing OECD review.

Last summer the way that exam results were assessed was changed after the fact to align more results to projections.

This year the final date for schools and colleges to submit provisional grades has been moved from Friday 28 May 2021 to Friday 18 June 2021 to allow pupils more time for core learning before assessment. Schools in Scotland have only

delivered online learning since the new lockdown was announced on 4 January 2021.