



Midlothian Council
Children, Young People and Partnerships
Directorate

Statutory Consultation Report

Report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation of the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

24 February 2026

This Consultation Proposal has been issued by Midlothian Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Background	5
3	Considerations	7
4	The Consultation Process.....	7
5	The Public Meetings.....	10
6	Responses to the Consultation Exercise	10
7	Support for the Proposal	13
8	Opposition to the Proposal.....	14
9	No Opinion on the Proposal	14
10	Education Authority Response to the Main Issues Raised	15
11	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) Report.....	16
12	Transition Arrangements	17
13	Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies.....	18
14	Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.....	18
15	Legal Issues	19
16	Scottish Ministers Call-in Closure Procedure.....	19
17	Personnel Implications.....	20
18	Environmental Issues.....	21
19	Conclusions	21
20	Recommendations	21

Appendix 1 Comments from Questionnaire Responses

Appendix 2 Pupil Questionnaire Responses

Appendix 3 Public Meeting Minutes

Appendix 4 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Report

Midlothian Council

Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate

This report has been prepared following a statutory consultation on the following proposal:

Proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, Midlothian Council proposes that:

- Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School headteacher.

The following schools are **directly** affected by the proposal:

- Mount Esk Nursery School
- Hawthornden Primary School

The following schools will be indirectly affected by the proposal:

There are no schools indirectly affected by the proposal.

Having had regard (in particular) to:

- a) Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- b) Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting which was held on 19 November 2025
- c) Any representations made to it by Parent Councils
- d) Oral representations made to it at the virtual public drop-in sessions on 11 and 20 November 2025
- e) Oral representations made to it by pupils
- f) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report on the proposal

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At a meeting of Midlothian Council on 16 November 2021, approval was granted for officers to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to incorporate Mount Esk Nursery School within Hawthornden Primary School and for a report on the outcome of the consultation exercises to be brought back to council for consideration and a decision.
- 1.2 Mount Esk Nursery School is a standalone early learning and childcare (ELC) setting located in Bonnyrigg, Midlothian. It has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 2002 and is operated by Midlothian Council. The nursery is registered to provide care for up to 64 children aged 3 to 5 years and operates a full-time model during school term time.
- 1.3 The nursery school is staffed appropriately as per the Care Inspectorate's regulation for child staff ratios in group based Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings. This is led and managed by a Head Teacher as well as having Senior Early Years Practitioners, Early Years Practitioners, and an administrative assistant. In addition, the school benefits from the support of two part-time cleaners and a caretaker.
- 1.4 The setting consists of a large playroom, a small sensory room, enclosed garden, toilets, nappy changing facilities, a small kitchen and two offices. There is a small woodland area behind the nursery which is accessed daily to offer a unique outdoor experience for the children attending.
- 1.5 The most recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate took place in June 2024. Mount Esk Nursery School achieved a combination of 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' ratings across key quality indicators, reflecting the high standard of care and education provided.
- 1.6 The Mount Esk Nursery School building in Bonnyrigg is shared with Mount Esk Family Learning Centre, operated by Midlothian Sure Start. This centre provides early learning and childcare for 2-year-olds.

Mount Esk has a well-established reputation for delivering high-quality early learning and childcare. It has consistently received positive evaluations in previous inspections and is recognised for its child-centred approach, inclusive practices, and strong parental engagement. These strengths contribute to a nurturing and stimulating environment where children are supported to thrive. It is expected that this high-quality service will continue under the leadership and management of Hawthornden PS Headteacher.
- 1.7 This is a Consultation Proposal prepared in compliance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 on the above proposal.
- 1.8 The purpose of this report is to:
 - Provide a record of the total number of written responses made during the Statutory Consultation period;
 - Provide a summary of the written responses;
 - Provide a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting held on 19 November 2025;

- Provide a statement of the Council's response to those written and oral representations;
- Provide the full text of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES)'s report and a statement of the Council's response to this report;
- State how the Council reviewed the above proposal following the representations received during the Statutory Consultation period and the report from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES);
- Provide details of any alleged omission from, or inaccuracy in, the Consultation Proposal Document and state how the Council acted upon it; and
- State how the Council has complied with Section 12 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* when reviewing the above proposal.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legislative duty on the Council to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand.
- 2.2 Section 3D of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (as inserted by Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. It is, therefore, the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children to their fullest potential.
- 2.3 In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* by continuous improvement in performance of the local authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve best value and optimum efficiency, the organisation of the school estate is therefore kept under regular review, including the need for school provision and other factors, such as altering catchment areas.
- 2.4 The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to the provision of education in its area including the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including Nursery Schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. *The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* principal purpose is:
- “to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools.”

2.5 This Proposal Document has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having regard to the statutory guidance published by the Scottish Government on 14 May 2015 and the complementary guidance published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) (revised July 2023), which are available for reference at the following websites:

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

Statutory Guidance (14 May 2015):
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4615>

Education Consultation Guidance for Local Authorities (revised July 2023)
<https://education.gov.scot/media/rh0jzhvo/external-schools-consultation-education-scotland-guide-for-local-authorities-july-2023.pdf>

The following information has also been used to prepare the report:

- Relevant written representations received by the Council (from any person) during the consultation period
- Oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting held on 19 November 2025
- Any representations made to it by Parent Councils
- Oral representations made to it at the virtual public drop-in sessions on 11 and 20 November 2025
- Oral representations made to it by pupils
- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES)'s report on the proposal

Midlothian's Vision for Education

The Council is ambitious for the future of Midlothian. By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener and successful lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

Our outcomes for the next 4 years are:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work
- No child or household living in poverty
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030

We continue to aspire to deliver a world-class education system through equity and excellence. Our vision is to provide the highest quality inclusive education, learning and employability service for all individuals and families in Midlothian.

To realise this vision we will support the priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan, Getting it Right for Every Child and will:

- give all our children the best possible start in life, providing an inclusive learning environment that builds resilience;
- ensure that every young person has the opportunity to be a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and an effective contributor who is healthy and happy, especially those who are care experienced;
- work with our communities to promote high expectations which deliver the best educational outcomes for all learners; and
- celebrate diversity, reduce inequalities and remove barriers to learning.

3 Considerations

3.1 The main considerations are relating to the closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and the redesignation to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class. These are fully explained in the Consultation Proposal Document. The main points are highlighted below:

- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act.
- The agreed principles underpinning the development of an empowered school led system set out in the 'Education Bill Policy Ambition- Joint Agreement', June 2018
<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8745/downloads>
- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

4 The Consultation Process

4.1 The Council has met the requirements set out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* with regards to ensuring the views of the community were listened to and their views are included in this report. In order to further ensure compliance with the Act, an independent consultant was engaged to chair all meetings to ensure impartiality.

The Council believes that this report accurately reflects the views of the community, which have been gathered through a range of engagement events and response mechanisms.

It is for members of Midlothian Council to decide to adopt the proposal, withdraw it or seek to consult on another proposal.

4.2 Notification of the consultation was given to all statutory consultees prior to the commencement of the consultation.

4.3 The Consultation Proposal Document was published on Midlothian Council's website and paper copies were distributed on 10 November 2025 to:

- Mount Esk Nursery School, Dalhousie Gardens, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LT
- Hawthornden Primary School, Polton Avenue Road, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2NZ
- Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA
- Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith, EH22 3AA

4.4 Copies of an information leaflet on the consultation were emailed to affected consultees (see list below) and schools and others on 5 November 2025.

4.5 Affected consultees:

- The children attending Mount Esk Nursery School.
- The pupils attending Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Parent Council of Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Parental Group of Mount Esk Nursery School
- The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to attend Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper.
- The staff employed by the Council and based at Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff.
- The Community Councils of Bonnyrigg and District.
- Community Planning Partnership.
- Other users of Mount Esk Nursery School

4.6 The consultation period commenced on Monday 10 November 2025 and lasted until Sunday 21 December May 2025, being a period of six weeks, which also included the statutory minimum 30 school days.

4.7 The proposal on which the consultation took place was:

Proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

4.8 The requirements for consulting on a relevant proposal relating to schools are set out in the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

4.9 An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings was issued to the consultees listed in the Consultation Proposal Document. Advice on where the complete Consultation Proposal Document could be obtained was included and was published on Midlothian Council's Consultation Hub:

[Mount Esk Nursery School Consultation - Midlothian Council - Citizen Space](#)

4.10 If requested, copies of the proposal would have been made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.

- 4.11 In addition the consultation was publicised and received engagement in the following ways:
- There were 7 Facebook posts: best performing Facebook post had 20,805 views and 81 engagements.
 - There were 7 Twitter posts and 7 Threads posts.
 - There were also 2 LinkedIn posts.
- 4.12 A generic email account was set up by the Council to receive representations and enquiries on the proposal.
- 4.13 The public meeting was held at Lasswade High School on Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 6:30pm.
- 4.14 In addition, virtual drop-in sessions via MS Teams were offered on 11 and 20 November 2025, which members of the public and staff were welcome to attend, however, there were no attendees.
- 4.15 In accordance with statutory requirements, the following persons, including those indirectly affected, were consulted:
- The children and pupils attending Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School;
 - The Parent Councils and parents/carers of Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School;
 - The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to attend Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School;
 - The staff employed by the Council and based at Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School;
 - The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff
 - The Community Council of Bonnyrigg and District;
 - The Community Planning Partnership.
- 4.16 The following schools are directly affected by the proposal:
- Mount Esk Nursery School
 - Hawthornden Primary School
- 4.17 Representations were sought from statutory consultees and the wider public in the following ways:
- An online questionnaire on Midlothian Council's Citizen Space Consultation Page. The questionnaire asked specific questions and enabled general comments and views to be entered.
 - Digital leaflets, Council web and social media announcements linked to the Consultation Page. These detailed a specific Education Consultations email inbox, to which any queries could be submitted during the consultation period.

- The Head Teachers of Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School used established methods of communication to engage/remind parents about the consultation.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Hawthornden Primary School.

4.18 The consultation report is the Council's response to the points raised during the consultation period on the Consultation Proposal Document.

4.19 This consultation report will be published for a period of three weeks before a final decision is taken by Midlothian Council on 24 February 2026.

5 The Public Meetings

5.1 The public meeting was held on Wednesday 19 November 2025 in Lasswade High School at 6:30pm to which seven members of the public attended.

6 Responses to the Consultation Exercise

6.1 As part of the consultation process, the Council sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders. The Council provided stakeholders with a short online or paper questionnaire and also made arrangements for receiving additional written responses. The Council received 29 responses to its questionnaire during the consultation period. All representations that had been made during the consultation period were submitted to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) and any issues or concerns raised are also subject to the Council's response in this Consultation Proposal.

The questionnaire responses are summarised by category in the following tables:

Table 1 – Number of respondents by type of respondent

Type of Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Organisations	1	3.4%
Individuals	28	96.6%
Not Answered	0	0%
Total Responses	29	100%

Table 2 – Number of respondents by category

Individual Respondent	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Parents	18	52.9%
Staff	5	14.7%
Member of Local Community	10	29.4%
Other/Unknown	1	2.9%
Total Responses	34	100%

**The total number of respondents differs from the number of respondents by category because some respondents identified with more than one category.*

**Numbers are shown to the single decimal point and therefore may not add exactly to 100 in this form.*

- 6.2 For the Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School? The responses were as follows:

Table 3 – Number of Responses by Opinion

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	5	17.2%
Agree	8	27.6%
No Opinion	2	6.9%
Disagree	4	13.8%
Strongly Disagree	10	34.5%
Not Answered	0	0%
Total Responses	29	100%

- 6.3 For the Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class? The responses were as follows:

Table 4 – Number of Responses by Opinion

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	4	13.8%
Agree	10	34.5%
No Opinion	3	10.3%
Disagree	4	13.8%
Strongly Disagree	8	27.6%
Not Answered	0	0%
Total Responses	29	100%

- 6.4 For the Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as part of Hawthornden Primary School? The responses were as follows:

Table 5 – Number of Responses by Opinion

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	4	13.8%
Agree	7	24.1%
No Opinion	2	6.9%
Disagree	6	20.7%
Strongly Disagree	10	34.5%
Not Answered	0	0%
Total Responses	29	100%

- 6.6 For the Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to place Mount Esk Nursery School under the Leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher? The responses were as follows:

Table 6 – Number of Responses by Opinion

Response	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	5	17.2%
Agree	6	20.7%
No Opinion	2	6.9%
Disagree	2	6.9%
Strongly Disagree	14	48.3%
Not Answered	0	0%
Total Responses	29	100%

- 6.6 The comments made as part of the questionnaire submissions are included in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 10 of this report.

Response Analysis from Organisations

- 6.7 There was 1 response from an organisation, their response has been included in tables 1 to 10 above. They did not wish their response to be shared publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 10.

Public Meeting

- 6.8 The public meeting was held at Lasswade High School on Wednesday 19 November 2025 at 6:30pm to which seven members of the public attended.
- 6.9 Additionally, virtual drop-in sessions were arranged for 11 and 20 November 2025, enabling any member of the public and staff to ask questions and discuss the proposal, the consultation process and how they could make representations. No members of the public attended these sessions.

Pupils and Staff

- 6.10 During the consultation period, Council officers facilitated meetings with pupils at Hawthornden Primary School to provide good opportunities for them to discuss and share their views.
- 6.11 A copy of the information leaflet and a link to the consultation page was sent to all staff, inviting them to respond to the consultation via the online survey and highlighting the consultation mailbox for any queries.

7 Support for the Proposal

- 7.1 44.8% of all questionnaire respondents (13 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School.
- 7.2 48.3% of all questionnaire respondents (14 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal to establish Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- 7.3 37.9% of all questionnaire respondents (11 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as part of Hawthornden Primary School.
- 7.4 37.9% of all questionnaire respondents (11 responses) to the consultation were in favour of the proposal to place Mount Esk Nursery School under the Leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
- 7.5 The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 10 of this report.
- 7.6 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses and responses can be found in section 10 of this report.

8 Opposition to the Proposal

- 8.1 48.3% of all questionnaire respondents (14 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School..
- 8.2 41.4% of all questionnaire respondents (12 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of the proposal to establish Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- 8.3 55.2% of all questionnaire respondents (16 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of the proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as part of Hawthornden Primary School.
- 8.4 55.2% of all questionnaire respondents (16 responses) to the consultation were not in favour of the proposal to place Mount Esk Nursery School under the Leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
- 8.5 The full text of all responses received can be read in Appendix 1, apart from submissions which consultees did not wish Midlothian Council to share publicly. Even if a submission is not shared publicly, it has still been included in the collation of stakeholder's views and informed the Education Authority's response as detailed in Section 10 of this report.
- 8.6 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses and responses can be found in section 10 of this report.

9 No Opinion on the Proposal

- 9.1 6.9% of all questionnaire respondents (2 responses) to the consultation had no opinion on the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School.
- 9.2 10.3% of all questionnaire respondents (3 responses) to the consultation had no opinion on the proposal to establish Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- 9.3 6.9% of all questionnaire respondents (2 responses) to the consultation had no opinion on the proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as part of Hawthornden Primary School.
- 9.4 6.9% of all questionnaire respondents (2 responses) to the consultation had no opinion on the proposal to place Mount Esk Nursery School under the Leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
- 9.5 A number of common points and questions emerged from the responses and responses can be found in section 10 of this report.

10 Education Authority Response to the Main Issues Raised

10.1 The care inspectorate requirements are that there is a manager within the nursery - how will this be managed?

The head teacher of Hawthornden Primary School will be the nursery manager, there are other settings in Midlothian where the manager successfully oversees a split site. In addition, the nursery will continue to have senior early years practitioners on site and a member of Hawthornden Primary School leadership team will be based in the nursery for an appropriate time each week.

10.2 How can the head teacher and deputy head teacher find appropriate time to support the nursery staff team and the school staff team?

It is normal in any primary school with a nursery class to have a member of the leadership team managing the nursery. The allocation of leadership time to the school will reflect the national and local staffing arrangements for schools with a nursery.

10.3 If something is working so well and this is clearly reflected in their consistently excellent Care Inspectorate grades, then why are we changing it?

Across Scotland stand-alone ELC settings are being subsumed into schools, this allows children a cohesive learning environment across their ELC and primary education. Experience across Scotland shows a nursery class in a primary school can be as effective as stand-alone nursery. The quality of experiences for our children in setting will continue to be supported by the Midlothian Council Early Years team.

10.4 Where exactly are nursery children going to go?

Any children attending Mount Esk Nursery School will continue to attend the current building. The Learning Estate Team are investigating the cost of providing nursery spaces on the Hawthornden Primary School site and will provide an update once the work is complete.

10.5 How will this improve transitions for very small children, for example from Good time to be 2 scheme placements?

Transition arrangements are in place in all school ELC settings and this will continue when the Mount Esk Nursery School moves to the leadership of Hawthornden Primary School. Mount Esk Nursery School staff have strong relationships with education leaders across all schools and this will continue under the new arrangement.

10.6 How will traffic safety be managed should Mount Esk Nursery School be physically relocated to Hawthornden Primary School?

A full risk assessment of traffic flow, volume and parking will be completed as part of the planning process if the nursery is relocated to the Hawthornden Primary School site.

10.7 The current Mount Esk Nursery School building requires a renovation, is this likely to happen or will new facilities be provided at Hawthornden Primary School?

The Learning Estate Team are investigating the cost of providing nursery spaces on the Hawthornden Primary School site and will provide an update once the work is complete.

10.8 Part of Hawthornden Primary School was renovated to allow an improved complex need provision but the rest of the school requires modernisation and refurbishment. If the nursery was to move into the building, where would it be located and would the rest of the school receive a refurbishment at the same time?

The Learning Estate Team are investigating the cost and location of providing nursery spaces on the Hawthornden Primary School site. School buildings are assessed for building condition and suitability as part of the annual Scottish Government School Estate Statistics report. Hawthornden Primary School was rated as satisfactory for both condition and suitability in the 2025 assessment.

11 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) Report

11.1 In accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, a report was produced by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) on the educational aspects of the proposal. The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of Midlothian Council's proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate it to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class. The His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report can be read in full at Appendix 6.

11.2 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 19 November 2025 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others, and;
- visits to the site of Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

11.3 The Summary section of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report summarises their findings and conclusions as follows:

HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to closing Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designating it to Hawthornden Primary School. There is scope to strengthen transition arrangements from nursery to primary one and develop joint approaches to learning and teaching and inclusion. Whilst the proposal is broadly welcomed by most stakeholders, there are concerns amongst a few staff and parents about the additional demands that may be placed on the senior management team at Hawthornden Primary School. Should the proposal be approved, the council needs now to produce a clear plan for implementation, both in the short and longer term. The council should also ensure that progress with the implementation is communicated to all stakeholders.

Midlothian Council's Response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES)'s Report

- 11.4 Midlothian Council welcomes the report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) which highlights the benefits of the proposal and the Education Authority accepts its findings. Officers from the Education Authority met to consider the content of the report and the action highlighted in the summary.
- 11.5 In response to the findings contained within the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report Midlothian has been asked to address the following points:

HM Inspectors recognise that there will be an increased workload for senior managers at Hawthornden Primary School and that the council will need to manage this carefully.

Should the proposal be approved, the senior management structure at Hawthornden Primary School will be reviewed in line with agreed legislation and the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme, with any changes required implemented.

Should the proposal be approved, the council needs now to produce a clear plan for implementation, both in the short and longer term. The council should also ensure that progress with the implementation is communicated to all stakeholders.

If the proposal is approved, Midlothian Council will complete their investigations into the required upgrades to provide ELC spaces at Hawthornden Primary School and update stakeholders with their findings and plans.

12 Transition Arrangements

- 12.1 Subject to the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, if approved, the closure and re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School as a stand-alone nursery school to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery will take effect from August 2026.

- 12.2 Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery School will not be significantly affected by the closure and re-designation as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as the proposal involves the technical closure of the current nursery school. This means that the nursery will no longer operate as a separate entity but will instead become integrated into Hawthornden Primary School's community of learning.
- 12.3 Parents and carers of eligible pre-school children would continue to apply for early learning and childcare provision at the re-designated Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- 12.4 Subject to the outcome and the decision taken by elected members on the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School is that the management structure of Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be formalised under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School.
- 12.5 There are no catchment areas for Early Learning and Childcare in Midlothian.

13 Alleged Omissions or Inaccuracies

- 13.1 *Section (10) (3) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* also places a requirement on the Council to provide details of any inaccuracy or omission within the Consultation Proposal Document which has either been identified by the Council or raised by consultees. This section of the 2010 Act also requires the Council to provide a statement on the action taken in respect of the inaccuracy or omission, or, if no action was taken, to state that fact and why.
- 13.2 There were no omissions identified by the Council or raised by consultees.

14 Compliance with Section 9(1) of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

- 14.1 Section 9(1) of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* states that:

After the Education Authority has received His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES)'s report, the Authority is to review the relevant proposal having regard (in particular) to:

 - (i) written representations received by the Authority (from any person) during the consultation period,
 - (ii) oral representations made to it (by any person) at the public meeting,
 - (iii) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES)'s report.
- 14.2 Following receipt of the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report, 29 questionnaire responses received during the consultation period and consideration of oral representations made at a public meeting held during the consultation period, officers reviewed the proposal.
- 14.3 The feedback from the consultation was considered by relevant officers within the Council's Children, Young People's and Partnership Directorate. Data and factual information was checked where required and advice and input was sought from other Council Services where needed to consider the issues raised. This

ensured that the Council met the requirements of sections 9(1), 12 and 13(3) (b) of the 2010 Act.

15 Legal Issues

- 15.1 The Council has complied in full with the requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* throughout this statutory consultation.
- 15.2 The Council is mindful of its duties in respect of equality under the *Equality Act 2010*, the *Public Sector Equality Duty 2011*, and the *Fairer Scotland Duty* (Part one of the Equality Act).
- 15.3 Under the terms of the *Schools (Scotland) (Consultation) Act 2010*, it is a legal requirement that the Council should not reach any formal decision without having reviewed the relevant proposal having regard, in particular, to:
- a) relevant written representations received from any person during the consultation period;
 - b) oral representation made to it by any person at the public meetings held on;
 - c) the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) report;
 - d) preparing a Consultation Proposal; and
 - e) waiting until a period of three weeks starting on the day on which this Consultation Report is published in electronic and printed form has expired.
- 15.4 As it is the intention that this Consultation Report should be published, both electronically and in paper form, if required, on 2 February 2026, this meets the statutory requirement to publish this report for more than three weeks before consideration of the proposal by Midlothian Council.

16 Scottish Ministers Call-in Closure Procedure

- 16.1 At the end of the consultation process, Section 15 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* enables Scottish Ministers to call-in a decision to implement the proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- 16.2 If the Council's final decision is to implement the proposal, it will require to notify the Scottish Ministers of that decision, and provide them with a copy of the proposal document and Consultation Proposal. This must be done within six working days of that decision. The Scottish Ministers have an eight week period from the date of that final decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal.
- 16.3 Within the first three weeks of that eight week period, the Scottish Ministers will take account of any relevant representations made to them by any person. Until the outcome of the eight week call-in process is known, the Council cannot proceed to implement the proposal.
- 16.4 If the Scottish Ministers call-in the proposal, they must refer the proposal to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who may refuse to consent to the proposal or grant their consent to the proposal subject to conditions or unconditionally.

- 16.5 Recipients of this Consultation Proposal, and other readers, should note that the legislation allows for any person to make representations to Scottish Ministers within three weeks of the Council taking their final decision to implement a closure proposal.
- 16.6 Midlothian Council will take the decision on whether or not to implement closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class at its meeting on 24 February 2026. If the decision is taken to implement, any representations to Scottish Ministers, therefore, in this context need to be with the Ministers within three weeks of this date. Therefore, any representations must be made to Scottish Ministers by 17 March 2026.
- 16.7 Anyone wishing to make representation to Scottish Ministers during the three week period referred to above should do so by email to schoolclosure@gov.scot or in writing to:

The Scottish Government
School Infrastructure Unit,
2B (North),
Victoria Quay,
Edinburgh,
EH6 6QQ

17 Personnel Implications

- 17.1 If this proposal is implemented the staff in Mount Esk Nursery School would transfer to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class from August 2026. The transfer of staff would be managed in accordance with existing agreed Council policies and procedures.
- 17.2 The proposed new management structure will allow children to continue to have access to high quality early learning and childcare and through a shared approach to curriculum delivery, peer learning opportunities and improved use of the nursery room and resources. enhance staff capacity for taking forward school improvement from early years through to P7.
- 17.3 The proposed Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be managed by the school leadership team at Hawthornden Primary School. The school leadership team entitlement will be enhanced to take this into consideration. The opportunity to have one staff team, working together towards a shared vision, will improve the educational experience for children.
- 17.3 The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class would be staffed according to local and national policies and agreements in place at the time, which are designed to ensure that all duties and responsibilities of the early years setting are carried out. The staffing levels will principally be determined by the number of children adhering to Care inspectorate guidelines around Safer Staffing.
- 17.5 Consultation will be undertaken with staff in affected schools, Trade Unions and professional associations where appropriate on an implementation plan. If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will

be mitigated through the Council's Education Leadership Team support structure.

18 Environmental Issues

18.1 In order to ensure that the vision, aims and objectives of the Midlothian Council Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Climate Change strategy 2020 are being addressed a number of strategic and operational factors have been considered as part of the proposed new school building, such as:

- Reduction of operational energy consumption to be in line with the Learning Estate Investment Programme targets;
- Strict construction embodied carbon targets to be met;
- Low carbon and zero waste processes to be implemented during the construction phase;
- Circular economy agenda to be promoted.

19 Conclusions

19.1 On the basis of the feedback received and taking account of the educational and social benefits of the proposal, it is concluded that:

- a) The Council believes that the measures proposed in this document will enhance and strengthen Early Learning Centre in the Lasswade Learning Community;
- b) This proposal will bring notable educational benefits to the present and future users of the Mount Esk ELC setting, and to other children, parents and families and partner services across the Lasswade Learning Community;
- c) Overall, there are strong educational arguments in favour of this proposal.

20 Recommendations

20.1 It is recommended that the Council approves the following:

- Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School headteacher.

Appendix 1 - Comments from Questionnaire Responses

Of the 29 questionnaire responses, 19 contained comments of which 18 declined permission to make their comments publicly available. However, their representations have been taken account of and responded to in Section 10 of the Consultation Proposal. The summary of comments below, were made from the remaining response who did not choose the option to decline permission to make their comments publicly available.

Comments
Mount Esk has always been closely linked to Hawthornden and as all other schools in Bonnyrigg have the nursery in the school this is not the case with Mount Esk and Hawthornden. I myself attended both as have my children and now grandchildren. It would make pick up and drop off easier for parents/carers if both were in the same building and easier transition for children moving from nursery to school if they are already familiar with the building.

Appendix 2 - Pupil Voice Session

Proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School.

Hawthornden Primary School, Voice Session.

2 December 2025.

Katy Maclean (KM) and Craig Murrin (CM) met with a selection of pupils to discuss the ongoing consultation and gain their views. They outlined the proposals and invited feedback and questions from the pupils.

In regards to closing Mount Esk Nursery and making it part of Hawthornden Primary School:

Good idea – Majority of pupils agreed.

Good Idea - I think it's a good idea because my sister will be going to the nursery and will be in the same school.

Good idea – I'm alright with it, it's a nice place to be here in this school. All teachers I have had I mostly like.

Good idea – Toddlers will be familiar and recognise the school when they go into P1.

Good idea – If anyone has any siblings will be in the same school and play together.

Good idea – Will be familiar with the name and not a big change for them when they come to the school.

Good idea - All the kids in nursery will be seeing P1 and will know people and make friends quicker.

Good idea - P7's will be able to buddy the nursery and P1 and can make new friends.

Bad idea – It might feel strange if someone has autism and needs to come to a new place.

In regards to having the Hawthornden Primary Head Teacher lead the nursery:

Good idea – Majority of pupils agreed.

Good idea – This will be good because the kids in the nursery will get to know the Head Teacher before they come into the primary school.

Bad idea – If something happens here at this school and Mrs Mellon needs to go to the nursery, she might not know what is happening here. It might be her fault because she is in charge of both schools.

Good idea – If a fire happened or if Mrs Mellon was not in the school, the depute could be in charge and teachers could take shifts.

Not sure - Mrs Mellon would need to be in the nursery as well as the school and it will be kind of weird for her because she will be Head Teacher of the same school and a different one at same time.

Further Questions:

Would this mean the Head Teacher from Mount Esk will be fired?

CM advised that the Council has policies and procedures in place for all staff and spoke about redeployment as well as other options the Council considers and what these mean.

If Mrs Mellon had to go to the nursery and the depute wasn't here, who would turn off the fire alarms?

KJ advised on fire safety procedures and nominated people who would be in charge if there was a fire.

How long will it take for the changes to happen?

KJ advised on the Consultation timescales, as well as His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIIES) report and how a closure consultation requires a call in period from Scottish Government.

Will I get to see the changes when they happen, I am in P7?

KJ advised that the changes, if agreed by Council in February 2026, will not take affect until August 2026.

How long will it take to build a new nursery next to our school?

KJ advised that the nursery school will remain in the same location and this is a name and leadership change. The nursery if approved, will be known as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class and not Mount Esk Nursery School.

Other comments from the pupils:

It would maybe be a good idea to put posters up about it so more people know.

Appendix 3 – Public Meeting Minutes

Proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School.

Public Meeting Minutes – Lasswade High School

Wednesday 19 November 2025

Attendees:

Alastair Delaney (AD), Independent Chair

Michelle Strong (MS), Chief Education Officer

Julie Fox (JF), Quality Improvement Manager

Magnus Inglis (MI), Service Manager – Acting Up

Jackie Mellon (JM), Head Teacher (Hawthornden PS)

Craig Murrin (CM), Business Support Officer

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) Representative

7 members of the public were in attendance.

Alastair Delaney (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Council Officers.

AD Introduced himself and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

AD explained the statutory consultation process and the work that would need to be undertaken by the Council in order to adhere to the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

Michelle Strong (MS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then outlined the proposals and spoke through the presentation slides.



Statutory Consultation Meeting

19 November 2025

Proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

Agenda



- Welcome and Introductions
- Format and purpose of meeting
- Statutory Consultation Process
- The Proposal
- Educational Benefits
- Questions
- Close and Thanks

Introductions



Midlothian

Name	Role
Alastair Delaney	Independent Chair
Michelle Strong	Chief Education Officer
Midlothian Council Officers Children, Young People & Partnerships Directorate	
Education Scotland	Observers

Introductions



Midlothian

Name	Role
Alastair Delaney	Independent Chair
Michelle Strong	Chief Education Officer
Midlothian Council Officers Children, Young People & Partnerships Directorate	
Education Scotland	Observers

Purpose of the meeting



- Proposal document published
- Council staff will present the proposal
- Opportunity for questions
- All comments and questions are noted

Statutory consultation process



- Proposed permanent change – Council must follow process contained in national legislation
- Consult for minimum 6 weeks
- Must hold a public meeting
- Must publish its final report

Relevant legislation



- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area in the *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*
- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act*
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

Statutory Consultation Process & Timeline



- Proposal Paper including Educational Benefits Statement published 10 November 2025.
- Statutory Consultation Period – 10 November 2025 to 21 December 2025.
- Representations from interested parties are sought throughout the consultation period
- Report by Education Scotland within 3 weeks of end consultation

Statutory Consultation Process & Timeline (2)



- Service takes account of all feedback
- Preparation of Final consultation Report– after 21 December 2025.
- Final consultation report published 02 February 2026.
- Decision by Midlothian Council– 24 February 2026.

Proposals



Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, Midlothian Council proposes that:

- Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.

Educational Benefits Overview



- **Inclusion:** Mount Esk Nursery School will be re-designated as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class, becoming part of the wider school community. This integration offers children more opportunities for social interaction and shared experiences such as assemblies and whole-school events. It supports smoother transitions into primary education, fosters a sense of belonging for families, and reflects the Council's commitment to equity and wellbeing from the earliest years.
- **Learning, Teaching, Achievement & Attainment:** The proposal strengthens educational continuity by aligning early years provision with primary education under one leadership structure. This supports progressive learning experiences consistent with national guidance, including *Curriculum for Excellence* and *Realising the Ambition*, ensuring children are well-prepared for future learning stages.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** Being part of a larger school community fosters emotional security and resilience in children. Midlothian Council recognises the importance of nurturing environments, and this integration will continue to promote consistent values, expectations, and support systems that contribute positively to children's mental and physical wellbeing.

Educational Benefits Overview (2)



- **Collaboration & Partnership Working:** The redesignation encourages professional collaboration between early years practitioners and primary teachers, enabling a shared understanding of children's needs. This supports Midlothian's goal of continuous improvement in educational outcomes through joint planning, peer learning, and a unified approach to curriculum delivery.
- **Local Community Engagement:** The proposal strengthens ties between families and the school by encouraging greater parental involvement in school life. Midlothian Council values community engagement as a driver of educational success, and this change will help build a more connected, supportive network around children's learning and development.

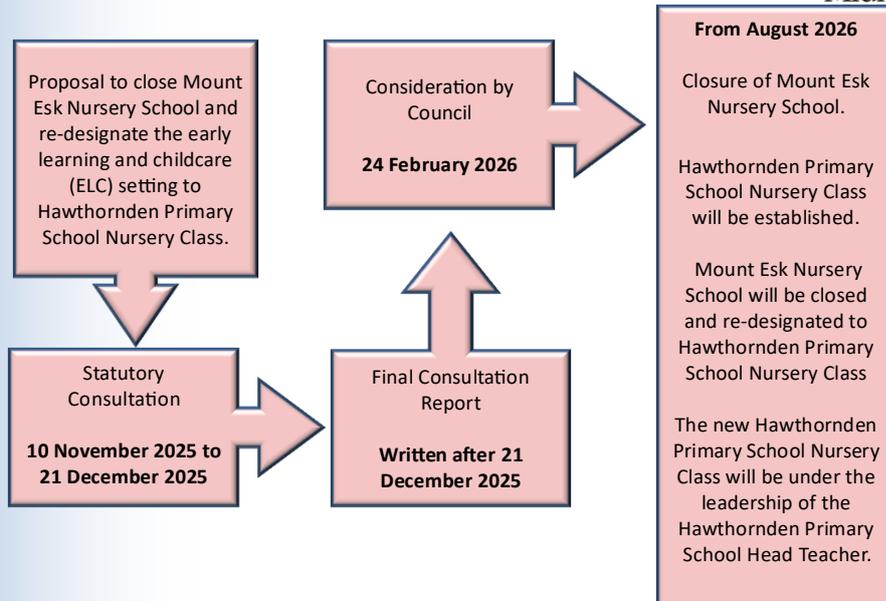
Outcomes



If the decision by Midlothian Council elected members in February 2026, is to approve the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class would mean that, from August 2026:

- Mount Esk Nursery School would close;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
- The Hawthornden Nursery Class will remain in the current Mount Esk Nursery School building. Any future changes to the nursery location will be managed by Midlothian Council's Learning Estate Team in line with the Learning Estate Strategy 2017-2047.

Project Timeline





Questions?

For any further or more specific questions
please email
educationconsultation@midlothian.gov.uk

I would like to know what happened to the promises that were made previously for when the provision and nursery were to be moved, and the building would have an overhaul. Jackie has done an amazing job, but the building is run down. What happened to this promise?

MS – I can't talk about past history as I was not here at that point. My understanding is there are still discussions ongoing on the future of the nursery provision at the Hawthornden Primary School site. I can't stand here and say that will happen, as our Learning Estate is under huge pressure regarding resource and budget, and we are continually assessing what we look to pause and step away from, etc. The costs of labour and materials are higher; as I said, the budget is under pressure in terms of Learning Estate, and I am not saying it won't happen in the future—we do not have confirmation it will happen at this time.

Parents were able to go and see the changes which you had done to the building. You put a fantastic facility into the building for the provision, and the children needed it and still do. What about the mainstream children? They could have done with the facilities which you have put in there. We were promised there would be an overhaul.

MS - We are not saying it is not going to happen. There are plans for the future as part of the Learning Estate Strategy. For this proposal, we are focusing on the education benefits for the technical closure of Mount Esk Nursery School..

MI – There is still a project for Learning Estate to look at Hawthornden PS. I am aware it is in the Learning Estate Strategy; however, there are various steps of governance, some of which have been agreed in principle, but we need

approval from elected members and government, etc., before we can progress. The project is still being worked on; we can't confirm it will go ahead at this time.

You can understand my frustration at not knowing when this will happen, and you also closed The Nest before.

AD – Summarised, provided assurance that all the comments and concerns are being noted, and thanked the member of the public for their question.

Is the nursery role going to change for Mount Esk when it becomes Hawthornden Nursery class? We offer wrap around care at our nursery at Polton Green. Is the consultation like for like?

MI – This consultation is about the technical closure, where the nursery will remain in place for the time being and, in time, may move up to Hawthornden PS, as this is what is in the Learning Estate Strategy.

AD – Summarised the proposal for the attendees as they missed the beginning of the presentation.

I thought it was in the Capital plan for it to move and change?

MS – It is part of the Capital Plan, among others, but we do not have the funding to do them all. Officers are continually looking at the financial side of things to see what is viable, etc. Tonight is about the proposed technical closure, which would mean that from August 2026 if approved, Mount Esk Nursery School would close, and Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will open under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School.

In terms of it being a shared place. It sounds like a saving; it is an additional for Jackie to take on and manage and how would you envisage the management to work?

MS - If the proposal is approved, Jackie will receive additional management time to manage the provision. This is not about reducing costs; it's about the educational benefits of having a nursery as part of a Primary School and the benefits to the Hawthornden community.

With the other consultation the Mayfield Head Teacher was going to be re job sized.

MI – Advised on the previous consultation regarding Mayfield and how the nursery will be placed under the leadership of St Lukes PS Head Teacher. MI also spoke about the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme; if someone covers two sites, there is management time given.

Children access the provision here at Lasswade HS. Now that Hawthornden primary school nursery class are going to remain where they are, we though that Lasswade were going to use the building for additional support?

MI – That would be a different consultation, which would need to be undertaken.

What is the timescale for the provision at Lasswade HS to change and move?

MS – We do not have timescales at this moment. A few years ago, we added the extra provision to Lasswade HS, and it has been really well received and used. If the nursery moves to Hawthornden, we will then check and look at other options to use the nursery building. The building will need to be fit for purpose, and as Magnus said, another consultation will take place.

The provision is great, but two classrooms up there are not fit for purpose and windows do not open. You have pupils will soreheads because of the heat etc.

MS – I will take this forward as an action and will raise it with colleagues tomorrow to have this checked and addressed. **NB this has been actioned and passed to the relevant team**

Are there any timescale when the Capital decision will be made?

MI – We are not in a position to give information on this, but colleagues are working on it.

For the Family Learning Centre at Mount Esk, we share the building with the nursery. Parents are thinking it is closing and will move. What then happens to the Family Learning Centre in the process? We are at capacity in there and full.

MS – I don't see any change to our day-to-day business in terms of Mount Esk Nursery and the support you provide to families; the only change will be if the location changes. For me, I want to give you the reassurance that this proposal is about the technical closure, which will mean, if approved, there will be a change to name and leadership. The provision will continue to operate in its current location and will look similar to what it is currently, and the last thing we would want to do is cause any anxiety or upset.

MI – Advised and explained on the statutory duty and terms regarding a technical closure.

MS - We are really keen for feedback on this consultation, and people can share their thoughts, opinions, and concerns.

We have felt like the Family Learning Centre has not been acknowledged and not mentioned anywhere.

MS – Please do not feel like that, as we value the work you do. But we need to look at this through the lens of Mount Esk Nursery School and the educational benefits this will bring, as well as the benefits of being linked to a bigger community. The important thing is, this technical closure will be a change in leadership and name if it is approved.

How would it look in the future for the Family Learning Centre?

MS – I am not sure how this would look. I would need to liaise with my counterpart, Bec Hooton.

For me, I do believe it is a great thing. Jackie, you are an amazing Head Teacher, and when you take the nursery on, there will be changes for the better. This is a great choice and idea—what Midlothian are doing for Mount Esk Nursery School.

AD – Summarised and reiterated the website for views to be taken into account.

AD & MS thanked attendees for their time.

Meeting concluded.

Appendix 4 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland (HMIES) Report

1. Introduction

1.1 This report from HMIE has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HM Inspectors) in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act"). The purpose of the report is to provide an independent and impartial consideration of a proposal by Midlothian Council to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class. Section 2 of the report sets out brief details of the consultation process. Section 3 of the report sets out HM Inspectors' consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal, including significant views expressed by consultees. Section 4 summarises HM Inspectors' view. Upon receipt of this report, the Act requires the council to consider it alongside any relevant considerations the council received and then prepare its consultation report. The council's consultation report should include this report and must contain an explanation of how, in finalising the proposal, it has reviewed the initial proposal, including a summary of points raised during the consultation process and the council's response to them. The council has to publish its consultation report at least three weeks before it takes its final decision. With all proposals the council needs to follow all statutory obligations set out in the 2010 Act. Where a council is proposing to close a school, there are specific additional obligations. These include notifying Ministers within six working days of making its final decision and explaining to consultees the opportunity they have to make representations to Ministers.

1.2 HM Inspectors considered:

- the likely effects of the proposal for children of the nursery and the school; any other users; children likely to become pupils within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper; and other children in the council area;
- any other likely effects of the proposal;
- how the council intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects that may arise from the proposal; and
- the educational benefits the council believes will result from implementation of the proposal, and the council's reasons for coming to these beliefs.

1.3 In preparing this report, HM Inspectors undertook the following activities:

- attendance at the public meeting held on 19 November 2025 in connection with the council's proposals;
- consideration of all relevant documentation provided by the council in relation to the proposal, specifically the educational benefits statement and related consultation documents, written and oral submissions from parents and others; and
- visits to the site of Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School, including discussion with relevant consultees.

2. Consultation process

2.1 Midlothian Council undertook the consultation on its proposal(s) with reference to the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

2.2 The consultation ran from 10 November to 21 December 2025. A public meeting took place on 19 November 2025 and was attended by seven stakeholders including parents and representatives from local childcare providers. The council received 29 responses to the public consultation with around half being in favour of the proposal going ahead. A few respondents expressed concern about the removal of the nursery manager post should the provision move to Hawthornden Primary School. A few respondents think that the transition between nursery and primary one will be improved if the proposal goes ahead. However, a minority of staff and parents also felt that this could lead to an unacceptable burden on the existing senior management team at Hawthornden Primary School in the longer term. A few others expressed concerns about increased traffic in the area surrounding Hawthornden Primary School should the proposal be implemented.

3. Educational aspects of proposal

3.1 The council believes that an ELC provision at Hawthornden Primary School will result in a range of educational benefits. They outline benefits in terms of inclusion, learning, teaching, achievement and attainment including transitions. They further believe that there could be improvements to the health and wellbeing of children based on previous experiences of including nursery schools as part of a wider school community in Midlothian. The council also considers that the approach is in line with current national guidance highlighting the importance of creating nurturing environments to inspire and motivate learners in the early years. HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits should the proposal go ahead. That the proposal has the potential to further develop shared approaches to inclusion and learning and teaching.

3.2 Almost all stakeholders who met with HM Inspectors agree with the proposal. Parents, staff and children can see the potential benefits of being located on one site. Almost all stakeholders are positive about the potential educational benefits of a smoother transition from nursery to primary one. Although stakeholders think the current arrangements work well, the joint location should help embed this. Stakeholders also think that collaborative working at early level will further support children's continuity of learning and shared standards. The proposed move should make it easier for parents who already have children in Hawthornden Primary School to manage the drop off and collection of children. HM Inspectors agree that being located in one building has potential benefits, including allowing for children's smoother transition from nursery to primary one.

3.3 A few stakeholders at Hawthornden Primary School expressed some concern about the increased workload on the senior management team at Hawthornden Primary School should the proposal go ahead. They feel that there needs to be a clearer plan provided by the council for how the process of managing the two sites in the short term until the physical move of Mount Esk Nursery School takes place. A few staff at Mount Esk Nursery School, although positive overall, are worried about the loss of outdoor space at the current location. HM Inspectors recognise that there will be an increased workload for senior managers at Hawthornden Primary School and that the council will need to manage this carefully.

4. Summary

HM Inspectors agree that there are potential educational benefits to closing Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the ELC setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class. There is scope to strengthen transition arrangements from nursery to primary one and develop joint approaches to learning and teaching and inclusion. Whilst the proposal is broadly welcomed by most stakeholders, there are concerns amongst a few staff and parents about the additional demands that may be placed on the senior management team at Hawthornden Primary School. Should the proposal be approved, the council needs now to produce a clear plan for implementation, both in the short and longer term. The council should also ensure that progress with the implementation is communicated to all stakeholders.

HM Inspectors

January 2026