Scottish School Data Infrastructure 2026–2036

3 March 2026



National MIS Procurement Signals Major System Review Across Scotland

Scotland’s national school data system is entering a period of formal review.

SEEMiS Group LLP has initiated procurement planning for a **replacement national Management Information System (MIS)**, with procurement support from Scotland Excel.

In practical terms, this means the organisation responsible for Scotland’s current school MIS platform has begun the formal process to **procure and potentially implement a new core system** that would serve all 32 local authorities and publicly funded schools.

This is not a routine software update or minor contract extension.

It signals that Scotland’s existing MIS framework — long regarded as the backbone of school data, attendance recording, attainment tracking, statutory returns and reporting — is being formally reviewed with a view to replacement. The involvement of Scotland Excel confirms this is a structured, national-level procurement exercise rather than an isolated technical refresh. Scotland Excel supports collaborative procurement across local authorities, meaning this process is designed to operate at scale and with system-wide impact.

If progressed to contract award, the outcome would determine the digital data infrastructure underpinning Scottish schools for the next decade and beyond. For local authorities, this represents a strategic decision about long-term architecture, governance and data capability. For school leaders, it signals that the systems used daily for recording attendance, managing pupil information, producing reports and supporting improvement planning may change in the coming years.

In short:

Scotland has formally begun the process of reviewing and potentially replacing the core data system used across its entire school estate.

That makes this one of the most significant digital education developments in recent years.

Why This Review Is Structurally Significant

National MIS procurement at this scale is rare.

Scotland has historically operated within a largely unified data environment. Stability and consistency have been defining characteristics of the national approach, with a shared system underpinning statutory returns, attainment reporting and operational management across authorities.

A coordinated review of this magnitude suggests recognition that expectations around digital infrastructure have evolved significantly.

Today, a school MIS is expected to support:

- Real-time improvement analytics
- Attendance and wellbeing trend monitoring
- Additional Support Needs oversight
- Secure statutory data returns
- Financial and workforce planning integration
- Cyber resilience and data protection compliance

The MIS is no longer viewed purely as an administrative recording system. It now underpins planning, performance insight and operational governance.

Replacing or redesigning this system therefore has implications that extend far beyond technical functionality.

It is a long-term architectural decision.

What This Means for Local Authorities

For Scotland's 32 local authorities, the review represents both opportunity and responsibility.

Authorities will now need to consider:

Data Readiness

How structured, clean and migration-ready is existing historical data?
What risks exist around data mapping and legacy architecture?

Governance & Compliance

How will future systems support evolving data protection standards, cyber security frameworks and national reporting requirements?

Interoperability

How effectively must the next system integrate with:

- Finance platforms
- HR systems
- Safeguarding tools
- Parent communication applications
- National data collection systems

Change Management

Large-scale system transitions require:

- Staff training programmes
- Phased migration planning
- Clear communication with schools
- Dual-running safeguards where necessary

While procurement will operate nationally, operational impact will be felt locally.

Authorities will be balancing long-term capability gains against short-term transition complexity.

What This Means for School Leaders

For headteachers, business managers and senior leadership teams, the implications are practical and immediate.

The MIS underpins:

- Daily attendance recording
- Attainment tracking
- Reporting to parents
- Monitoring of vulnerable pupils
- Planning meetings
- Inspection preparation

Any national shift in system architecture will ultimately affect the tools used to manage these responsibilities.

School leaders will therefore be watching for clarity around:

- Usability
- Reporting consistency
- Administrative workload
- Data accuracy
- Integration with classroom and digital learning tools
- Training support

Above all, leaders will seek assurance that any transition improves clarity and reduces duplication rather than adding operational burden.

What This Means in Practical Terms for Headteachers

For many headteachers and senior leadership teams, the immediate reaction to news of a national MIS review may be practical rather than architectural.

The questions are likely to be straightforward:

- Will our system change?
- Will staff need retraining?

- Will this increase workload?
- Will reporting become more complicated?
- Will this ultimately reduce administration?

At this stage, it is important to stress that the procurement process is part of long-term strategic planning. No immediate system changes are expected, and any future transition would be phased carefully over time. Large-scale infrastructure shifts of this nature typically operate across multi-year timelines. Schools would not be expected to manage abrupt change. Any implementation would involve structured planning, formal communication and supported training programmes. For school leaders, the central consideration is continuity and workload.

A national review is intended to ensure that future systems:

- Improve clarity of reporting
- Strengthen data accuracy
- Integrate more effectively with existing digital tools
- Reduce duplication of data entry
- Support inspection and improvement preparation more efficiently

The objective of such a review is not disruption. It is to ensure that Scotland's school data infrastructure remains resilient, modern and aligned with evolving expectations over the next decade. Headteachers should therefore view this development as long-term infrastructure planning rather than imminent operational change. In the short term, day-to-day systems and reporting processes remain as they are. In the longer term, this review aims to ensure that the tools schools rely upon continue to support improvement, governance and pupil outcomes effectively.

England Case Study — Lessons from Recent MIS Transitions

While Scotland prepares for a national MIS review, many local authorities and multi-academy trusts in England have undergone significant transitions in recent years.

Across England:

- Authorities have increasingly moved toward cloud-enabled, centrally

managed environments.
- Modern systems have been designed with stronger interoperability between school management, finance and reporting tools.
- Data dashboards have become embedded within school workflows, supporting improvement planning and trend analysis.

Common themes from successful implementations include:

Strong Interoperability

Systems integrated effectively with finance, safeguarding and national reporting pipelines, reducing manual processes.

Clear Reporting Structures

Improved visibility of attendance, attainment and inclusion data through structured dashboards.

Phased Implementation

Successful transitions were delivered through careful planning, structured training and staged migration to reduce disruption. These experiences illustrate that large-scale MIS modernisation can be achieved successfully when governance, communication and implementation planning are prioritised.

What Happens Next

Procurement processes of this scale typically follow several stages:

1. Market engagement and consultation
2. Formal specification development
3. Tender release
4. Evaluation and award
5. Phased implementation planning

While timelines may extend over several years, strategic direction is often shaped early in the process. Authorities will now begin internal assessments of infrastructure readiness and future capability requirements. Schools may not see immediate change, but long-term planning has clearly begun.

Why 2026 Is a Defining Year

The decisions taken during this procurement cycle are likely to influence:

- How national education data is structured
- How Additional Support Needs insight is analysed
- How attendance trends are surfaced at scale
- How performance evidence is collated
- How digital estates integrate across authorities

This is not simply a system replacement. It is the beginning of a generational review of Scotland's school data infrastructure. The architecture chosen will underpin governance, reporting and improvement capability into the mid-2030s.

A National Moment of Transition

For years, Scotland's MIS environment has provided stability and cohesion. This new procurement phase signals a willingness to reassess and modernise that foundation. For local authorities and school leaders alike, this is a pivotal period. The structure, resilience and interoperability of Scotland's education data systems are now under formal review. The outcome will shape how Scotland's schools record, manage and interpret information for the next decade and beyond.

The School Network will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as this significant national process progresses.