

## Inspection: How does using VotesforSchools support British Values and SMSC?

*At the heart of our work is our understanding of the need to be able to demonstrate to external partners how VotesforSchools supports the requirements set by these bodies.*

*We have outlined clearly how we support delivery on the following Ofsted & Independent Schools Inspectorate outcomes and provided some key responses to questions inspectors may ask when discussing British Values & SMSC.*

### Effectiveness of Leadership & Management

- ✔ Provide learning programmes or a curriculum that have/has a suitable breadth, depth, and relevance so that they meet any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners, and employers, nationally and in the local community
- ✔ Actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination, and lessen any gaps in achievement between different groups of students
- ✔ Actively promote British Values
- ✔ Make sure that safeguarding arrangements to protect children, young people and learners meet all statutory and other Government requirements, promote their welfare, and prevent radicalisation and extremism.



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## Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment

- ✔ Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching
- ✔ Where relevant, English, Mathematics and other skills necessary to function as an economically active member of British society and globally are promoted through teaching and learning.

## Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare

- ✔ Understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks such as abuse, sexual exploitation, and extremism, including when using the internet and social media
- ✔ Personal development, so that they are well-prepared to contribute to wider society in Britain, and respect others.

Question/Criteria	VotesforSchools commentary
<b>How do staff engender a fair and unprejudiced approach on the part of the students?</b>	VotesforSchools resources provide staff with the objective, fact-based arguments to help them debate and discuss current and topical issues. This puts staff in a confident position to present relevant and unbiased facts on a wide range of diverse topics. Use of VotesforSchools ensures there is an inclusive and unprejudiced approach to discussing sensitive subjects.
<b>Is there equality of opportunity and appreciation of diversity taught in the school?</b>	VotesforSchools gives a consistent and quality approach to ensuring that every student can access and can engage in discussion around British Values and develop their critical thinking.



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<b>How does the school assist students in combating harassment and bullying? What evidence is there of improvement?</b>	VotesforSchools encourages and empowers students to have a voice; the resources give them the tools to “be heard” on any personal issues, or when they see others in risky situations.
<b>How do the curriculum and extra-curricular activities promote students’ British Values? How do you monitor the impact of this? Where would I be most likely to see examples of this being taught?</b>	Using VotesforSchools as a tutor package means active promotion of British Values. The students vote on (largely British) issues every week, from Brexit to space travel, to how Government money is spent. VotesforSchools actively and explicitly promotes British Values as each week students vote on the topic being discussed. The school then receives the results of this two weeks later, providing access to the gender and age group votes as well as how many students participated. The VoteDiary allows staff to look at how the students are developing the skills associated with British Values such as tolerance, understanding and empathy.
<b>What specific steps have been taken to improve students’ behaviour and learning with respect to the development of British Values?</b>	VotesforSchools allows staff to facilitate lessons on engaging subject areas about which students are interested. Using VotesforSchools allows staff to develop students’ understanding of the world they live in, in an interactive and stimulating way. It also allows students to participate in democratic practices on a weekly basis. The weekly topics are relevant and student-centred. As a result, students are motivated and want to learn about the topics each week.



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<b>How and where does the school monitor and evaluate students' preparation for life in modern Britain? What does this information tell you about how well students have developed?</b>	VotesforSchools maps which areas of British Values, SMSC, and Prevent are covered each week by the topic. When young people vote, staff are given the data, showing what the students think and feel about certain issues. The accompanying VoteDiary also allows students to reflect on how their British Values skills have developed and how they would like to hone these in future.
<b>How are students involved in the life of the school?</b>	Using VotesforSchools allows students to consider how they can be heard within their own school. Fortnightly, there is a "Call to Action" at the end of the VotesforSchools presentations, which shows students how to make a change nationally, locally, or within the school setting.
<b>Can you show me examples of displays or artwork around the school which promote British Values?</b>	VotesforSchools provides display materials for schools to develop tutor display areas, promote the school's results and encourage development in the skills of being informed, curious and heard.
<b>How and where do students/staff have the opportunity to discuss different points of view? How do teachers make sure that different viewpoints are valued?</b>	VotesforSchools gives teachers the confidence to present a wide range of topics and actively encourage students to have differences of opinions. It also models objective and unbiased arguments, demonstrating to students that any opinion is valid but should be supported with informed evidence.



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<p><b>Can you give examples of how British Values are promoted in the culture and ethos of the school?</b></p>	<p>Using VotesforSchools as part of the weekly timetable demonstrates an absolute belief that British Values are at the heart of the school. VotesforSchools is an inclusive package, meaning every student in every year group can access the weekly debate. As a result, this can bring genuine unity and cohesion to the school community and beyond.</p>
<p><b>How do teachers plan their lessons to include strategies and resources that reflect the diversity of cultural experiences in modern Britain?</b></p>	<p>The VotesforSchools lessons are planned and resourced for teachers, but they can also supplement teaching with the weekly list of “cross curricular” activities which demonstrate how other subject areas can use the theme of the VoteTopic to continue the discussion whilst meeting their own curriculum needs. Teachers are also actively encouraged to look at the SMSC, British Values and Prevent map that is downloadable along with their resources every week (also known as the “Curriculum Guide”). This gives the staff a real understanding of how they are contributing to British Values development in students.</p>
<p><b>How do you ensure that the students in this school learn about what is like to be in different communities, beyond their immediate experience?</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools resources expose students to a diverse range of topics. Within these is an opportunity for students to make ethical and moral decisions. By looking at the different sides of a wide range of debates, they develop skills of tolerance, empathy and understanding.</p>
<p><b>How does the school help students prepare for the next stage of education, training or employment? How effective is this?</b></p>	<p>VotesforSchools is giving students skills that will stay with them for life. These include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engagement in democracy</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> making your voice heard</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> articulating your opinion</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> listening to others</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> coming to decisions</li> </ul> <p>The Secondary 16+ Lesson specifically develops critical thinking and is more focused on work/apprenticeship and university skills. The VoteDiary also allows students to think</p>



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	about how the skills and learning gained from participating in VotesforSchools can be used in further pathways.
<b>How does the school help students to become active citizens, both in school and in wider society? What is participation in these activities like?</b>	Participation in VotesforSchools is expected and required of students. We believe this platform is educating students about their world and communities, as well as consistently asking them how they can make a difference.



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## Inspection: How does using VotesforSchools support your duty to prevent students being drawn into extremism?

*“From 1 July 2015 all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. Schools and childcare providers can also build pupils’ resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. It is important to emphasise that the Prevent duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, schools should provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments”.*

### **Department for Education (DfE) Guidance**

At the heart of our work is our understanding of the need to be able to demonstrate to external partners how VotesforSchools supports the requirements set by The Prevent Duty. The detailed table on the following pages gives examples of how we support our schools.



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Criteria	VotesforSchools commentary
<b>Students should develop questioning skills and techniques to open debate in a safe way</b>	VotesforSchools is working to develop these skills in every student. Though outstanding content with diverse activities, students are gaining skills of communication and critical thinking. The content also provides the teacher with materials to ensure the topic engages all students in the discussion in a safe and balanced way.
<b>Students should feel confident to discuss honestly a plurality of views</b>	The weekly debate allows this to happen within the classroom; alongside the debate itself, students can vote on how they feel. The content is unbiased and objective – we always ensure that both sides of any debate are clearly laid out and understood.
<b>Schools should allow students to debate fundamental moral and human rights principles</b>	This is exactly why VotesforSchools was set up: as teachers ourselves, we all agree that students should be able to engage in moral debates and this should not be government by whether they have a teacher who believes in that too. The package is whole-school, so every young person gets the opportunity to have these conversations. Our approach to this debate is youth-focused, so while the questions may often seem “light-hearted”, this is used to help capture their attention before discussing the topic in more depth. A good example of this is “Would you travel the world alone?”, which gave students the chance to think about the experiences of child refugees.
<b>Give students a safe place to respond to current events that will challenge their beliefs</b>	VotesforSchools works on a weekly basis, which allows us to respond to current events (both national and international). The resources are developed at the beginning of the week and are released on our website on Fridays for teaching the following week. This ensures our schools are equipped to discuss current events as they are unfolding, but also doing so in a calm and thoughtful manner.



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<b>Students can influence and participate in decision-making on issues affecting them in their society</b>	VotesforSchools gives young people the chance to have a voice on issues that go beyond the classroom. A weekly vote is used to make impact on policy change, institutional reform and to contribute to research, and students are told every week how their vote is making a difference. A "Call to Action" at the end of every fortnight provides ideas on how students can influence their schools and local communities in a creative and youth-focused way.
<b>Demonstrate that your school can provide a safe place to discuss and debate topical and controversial issues affecting young people</b>	VotesforSchools enables any member of the school community, including support staff, to facilitate a debate on a weekly issue. The topic is aligned to the news agenda or to national events, such as Anti-Bullying Week or Black History Month. The content is unbiased and objective, going through quality-assurance checks to guarantee it is appropriate and accurate for students.
<b>Students should know how to challenge extremist narratives and promote universal rights</b>	VotesforSchools has worked closely with UNICEF to create topics that promote the UNCRC, and frequently consult other organisations to cover issues that relate to human rights, particularly those of young people. The weekly Curriculum Guides map the topics to the UNCRC.
<b>Students can express their views and appreciate the impact their views can have on others</b>	Through well-researched content, the lessons build in various opportunities for students to express how they feel about the topic. Alongside this, a VoteDiary (which is provided when schools sign up) allows students to self-assess their development in critical thinking, oracy and listening skills. Students can also leave comments when voting, and this platform is particularly valuable for those who are less able to vocalise their views in the classroom. These comments are monitored by the VotesforSchools team and later shared on the feedback slide for students to see.



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<b>Students can discuss terrorism and the wider use of violence in a considered and informed way</b>	Using VotesforSchools gives any teacher the opportunity to discuss terrorism and extremism (as well as other moral and ethical issues) in a coherent and clear way. It allows teachers to feel confident to discuss the topic without any prior understanding. The most important factor for schools is that VotesforSchools allows for consistent and quality conversation on these topics. The weekly resources ensure the discussions are appropriate and that teachers remain objective on these topics throughout the session.
<b>Schools can facilitate understanding of wider societal issues and how we can exercise democracy to influence change</b>	VotesforSchools allows staff to facilitate discussions on subject areas that are relevant to students. Using VotesforSchools allows students to develop their understanding of the world they live in as part of an interactive and engaging way. It also allows them to participate in democratic practises on a weekly basis, developing an understanding of the importance of voting and making your voice heard.
<b>Students should be given the platform to challenge Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and other prejudices</b>	VotesforSchools regularly engages in debate and discussion on all discrimination- and prejudice-based issues. The ability to challenge all types of prejudice in a calm and considered manner allows students to feel more confident in opening up discussion with those who have differing (or prejudiced) views. The skills developed are transferable to a range of other issues, such as drugs, exploitation, gender-based discrimination and much more. Specific examples include: "Can sharing stories prevent extremism?" and "Is the UK a tolerant place to live?"
<b>Students should use safe-to-learn anti-bullying strategies to minimise hate- and prejudice-based bullying</b>	Specific topics on anti-bullying strategies and hate crime allow students to openly discuss these issues and develop strategies to combat them, both on a personal and institutional level. Each week, students are encouraged to challenge prejudice in its various forms or to consider why people hold different views. The modelling of debate and discussion encourages conflict resolution through effective and considered communication.

 **Please Note:** See overleaf for endorsements from the VotesforSchools community.



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## Endorsements from the VotesforSchools community

- ✔ *"Just a quick email to say thanks for yesterday. It was a real highlight of my career to have you all in and the outcomes were educational gold. We have already received three emails from parents full of praise for the day and how it kick-started conversations around the dinner table."*

**Deputy Headteacher – Turing House School**

- ✔ *"Leaders ensure that pupils develop an understanding of democracy, respect and other modern British Values. Pupils regularly vote on different themes to express an opinion. For example, during the recent presidential election in the United States pupils considered the quandary of 'Should celebrities become politicians?' Such debate enables pupils to express their views respectfully and have their voices heard."*

**Ofsted Inspection report – The Ashwood Academy**

- ✔ *"Thank you for letting me be involved with VotesforSchools, I'm a firm believer of such engagement is the way forward to Prevent Extremism in all its forms."*

**Hanif Qadar – CEO of Active Change Foundation**

- ✔ *"VotesforSchools is a great tool to get young people discussing contemporary issues in an informed way. It is an intuitive and creative platform that facilitates whole school discussion and debate whilst also meeting SMSC and Citizenship requirements. The team at VotesforSchools are very supportive and incorporate feedback into their product development so that it meets the changing needs of schools and young people today."*

**Bhawani Daniel – Acland Burghley School**



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✔ "One of the biggest challenges faced today by Global Democracies, and it is an existential challenge, is the ability of our population to think critically for themselves, to hear what others say, and to judge their

arguments impartially. VotesForSchools provides one of the most practical and excellent resources for teachers throughout the UK to empower the students they teach to do just that. To think critically, impartially and in a balanced way. We are so pleased to have been able to introduce this invaluable resource to the schools we support."

**Nigel Cohen – Values Based Education**

✔ "Votes for Schools is about highlighting topics that influence our daily lives and leads to an understanding for young people that everyone can have a real voice. For teachers, all curriculum areas are enhanced through the debate provided by this innovative and inclusive resource."

**Dame Anna Hassan, DBE**



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## Inspection: How does using VotesforSchools support the new Draft Ofsted Inspection Framework (2019)?

*At the heart of our work is an understanding of the need to be able to demonstrate to external partners how **VotesforSchools** supports the requirements set by these bodies.*

Areas of inspection framework	School self-evaluation/VotesforSchools commentary
<b>Personal Development</b>	
<b>The curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical, or vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.</b>	VotesforSchools' weekly current affairs and topical content allows all students to engage in learning that goes beyond the classroom. The platform uses child- and youth-focused topics to capture the interests of students across the school. The diversity of topics ensures all students have ample opportunity to discover an interest or subject that they may not have been introduced to previously. Through a clear "Call to Action" and "Career Launchpad" at the end of each lesson, VotesforSchools encourages students to consider how they can foster emerging passions and interests as well as to seek out careers and roles that they may not ordinarily explore.
	<b>Sample topics:</b> "Is speaking English enough?"   "Will what you learn in PE help you get a job?"   "Is gaming good for you?"   "Can chart music teach us about black history?"



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**The curriculum and the provider's wider work supports learners to develop their character – including resilience, confidence and independence – and helps them understand how to keep physically and mentally healthy.**

VotesforSchools' debates help to support a wide range of skills that contribute to character development in students. These include tolerance, empathy, oracy, confidence & resilience. Through weekly debate and discussion, students are given a safe space to explore social & political issues, and build skills of tolerance, respect, compassion, listening to others & hearing views that are opposed to their own or those of their family/friends.

Through relevant topics spread over the course of the academic year, students cover a range of subjects that support their understanding of physical and mental health. They also explore the contributing factors in society that impact their holistic health.

**Sample topics:** "Is social media bad for your mental health?" | "Do anonymous apps make bullying worse?" | "Will vaping be banned?" | "Does the modern world make it harder for diseases to spread?"

**The provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: equipping them with the skills needed to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding of fundamental British Values; building their understanding of and appreciation for diversity; celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined by law.**

VotesforSchools' mission is to directly provide schools with the tools to allow all teachers, regardless of experience or subject specialism, to confidently deliver a consistent and quality approach to British Values for every student. The topics regularly allow teachers to delicately facilitate discussions that expose students to a range of views and opinions that support their understanding of diversity and allows them to celebrate diversity within the UK.

Students vote at the end of every debate, and this vote then feeds into national policy and is shared with key decision-makers. This leads students to the understanding that their contribution to society is important, both within their school and as a citizen of a wider community.

The weekly opportunity to exercise their right to vote that VotesforSchools provides allows students to model good democratic practice and empowers them to use their voice and vote in future. It breaks down some of the psychological barriers that stop children and young people engaging in politics and community action.

**Sample topics:** "Should the UK stay in the single market?" | "Should Eid be a public holiday?" | "Is your high street disability-friendly?" | "Is the UK a tolerant place to live?" | "Does Pride month inspire unity?"



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Quality of Education	
<b>Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.</b>	VotesforSchools ensures schools can provide a package that provides cultural capital to all students inclusively. The weekly topics expose students to a range of stories, experiences, knowledge, and skills that enable them to engage in today's society.
	<b>Sample topics:</b> "Do you consider Banksy's recent stunt to be art?"   "Do you want to be internet famous?"   "Do you enjoy reading?"   "Do the Olympics need updating?"
Behaviour & Attitudes	
<b>Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Learners feel safe and do not experience bullying or discrimination.</b>	VotesforSchools directly supports teachers in developing a positive relationship with students. It does so by supporting them with discussions surrounding moral dilemmas and tricky subjects in a delicate and age-appropriate way. Schools regularly report that the sessions support a positive rapport between teachers and students. VotesforSchools is designed to empower students and give them an opportunity to have their voice genuinely heard. This tool allows them to say if they see something that they believe is not acceptable, or if they themselves are being hurt or threatened. VotesforSchools and the skills it develops are designed with the empowerment of children and young people in mind, with them beginning to self-safeguard and use their voice as a means of speaking out as the main aim.
	<b>Sample topics:</b> "Are adults setting a bad example when it comes to bullying?"   "Do your friends use homophobic language?"   "Will increased awareness help end modern slavery?"   "Do you think it is possible to reduce bullying in your school?"   "Do young people know the signs of an abusive relationship?"



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## Leadership & Management

**Those with responsibility for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its statutory duties (such as under the Equality Act 2010), and other duties (such as those in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safeguarding).**

VotesforSchools directly aligns with the Government's Prevent duty. VotesforSchools provides weekly content that enables students to engage with controversial topics and discuss moral dilemmas. This supports them in building the skills that will enable them to be resilient in their communities. By directly addressing topics around equality - such as LGBTQ+ inclusion and racism - as well as topics directly linked to extremism, students are also developing the skills to understand these issues in an unbiased and objective way, often challenging views held by other influences in their lives. VotesforSchools' mission is to empower students and give them a voice within their schools, local communities and nationally. Empowering students and allowing them to be heard is a powerful self-safeguarding tool which will help with keeping them safe both now and in the future.

**Sample topics:** "Can you understand why someone would become an extremist?" | "Do you have a responsibility to help tackle extremism?" | "Should teens involved in county lines be classed as criminals?" | "Should youth criminal records last into adulthood?" | "Will the recent anti-racism protests lead to change in the US?"



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