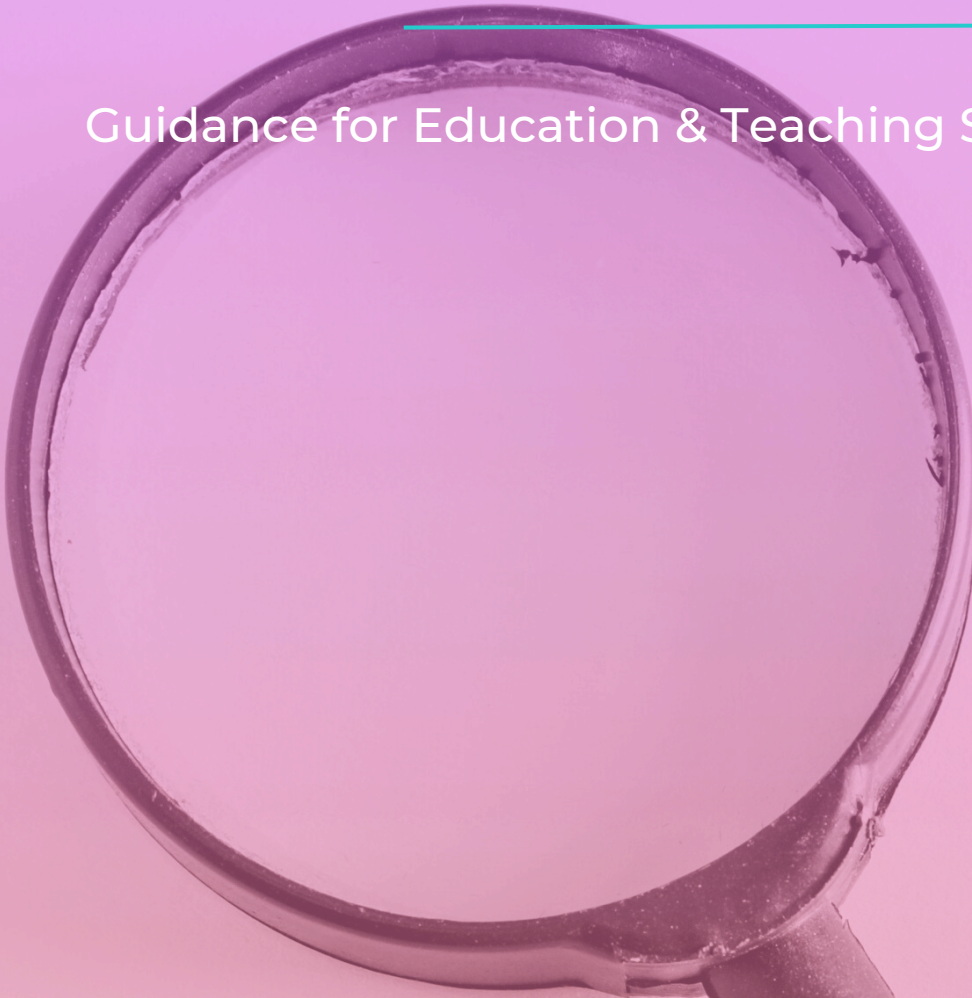


# VOTESFORSCHOOLS & INSPECTION BODIES

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Guidance for Education & Teaching Staff | England



# CONTENTS

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This document outlines how VotesforSchools supports educational settings in obtaining a “Strong standard” or “Exceptional” Ofsted grading across a range of areas, as per the **State-Funded School Inspection Toolkit**, which will be used for all inspections from January 2026.

For the purposes of this document, “students” is used as a catch-all term for pupils/children or learners/young people; “staff” is used to denote any group of educational professionals (e.g. teachers, tutors etc), and “schools” is used to refer to any type of educational setting. Use the contents below to explore the Ofsted inspection areas.

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This document also details the ways in which VotesforSchools supports the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), as per the **2023 Inspection Framework**. Use the contents below to explore the ISI inspection areas.

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- Ofsted (via GOV.UK) | [State-funded school inspection toolkit](#)
- Independent Schools Inspectorate | [Framework for the inspection of association independent schools, including residential \(boarding\) schools and registered early years settings](#)

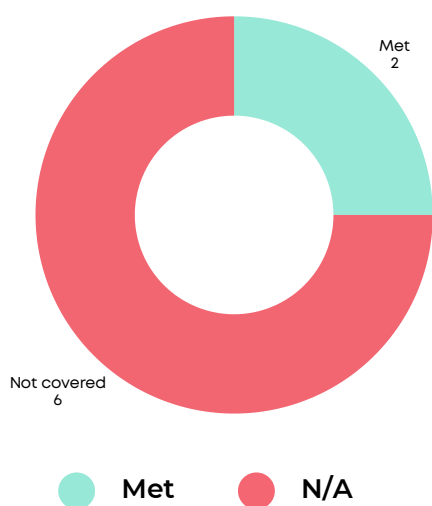
If you have any questions about the information in this document, please contact [info@votesforschools.com](mailto:info@votesforschools.com).

# OFSTED | VOTESFORSCHOOLS' REPORT CARD

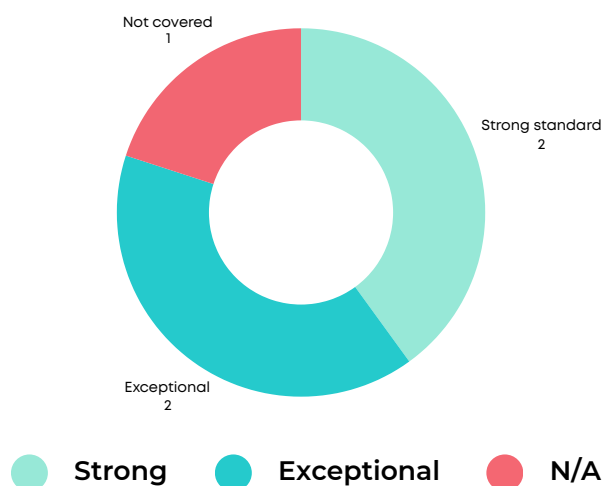
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We believe honesty is the best policy. So, while VotesforSchools supports a range of Ofsted inspection criteria, it is not comprehensive. Below is our “report card” highlighting the extent to which the programme can support schools in obtaining “Met”, “Strong standard” or “Exceptional” gradings in inspections.

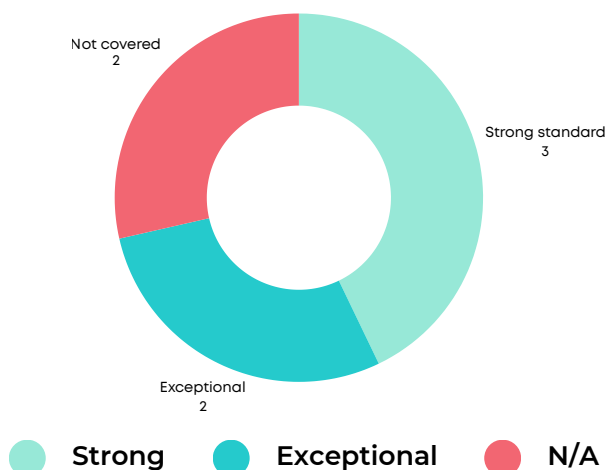
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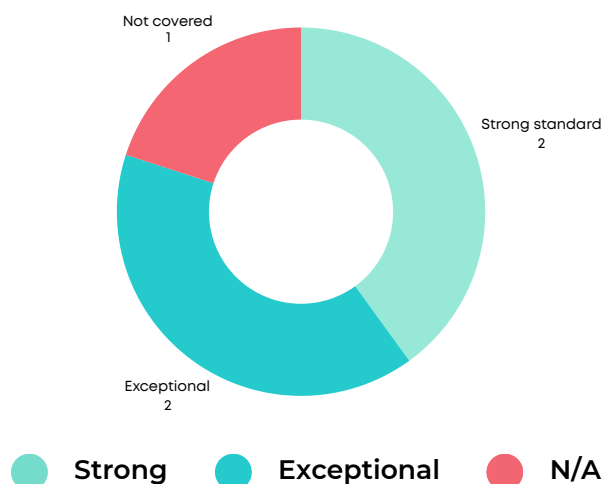
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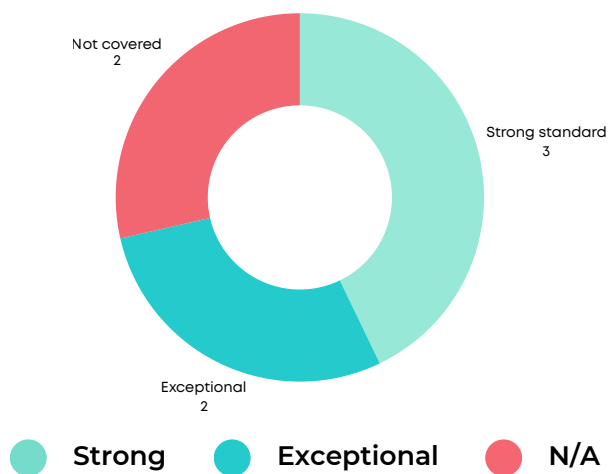
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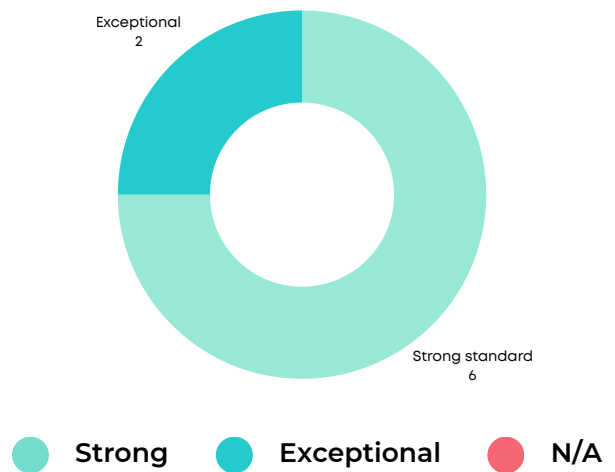
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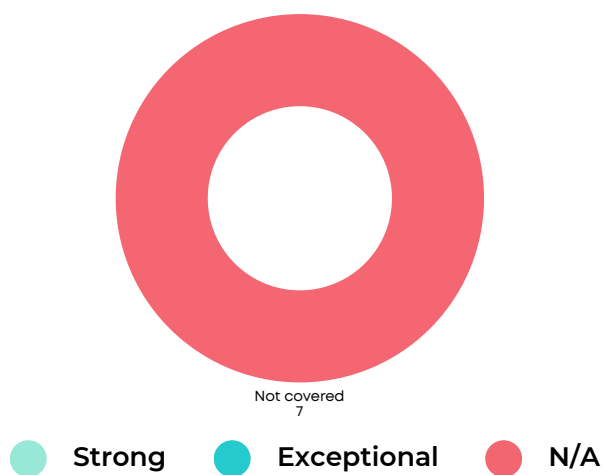
## ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR



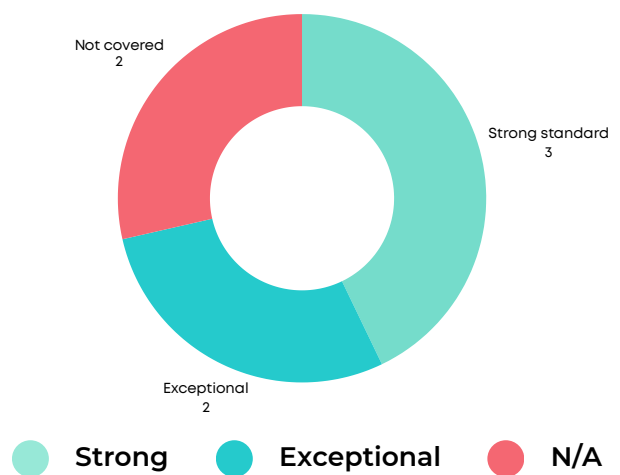
## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & WELL-BEING



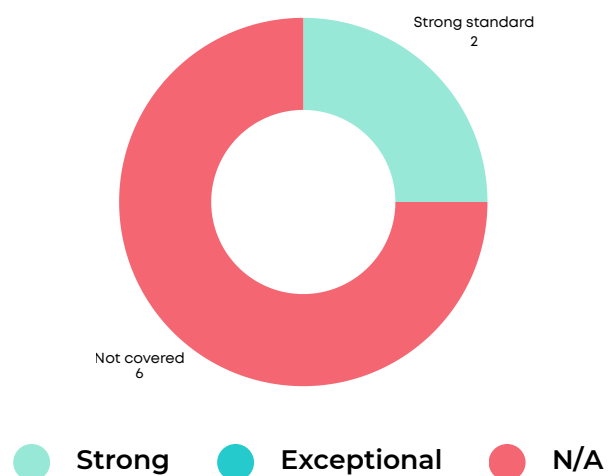
## EARLY YEARS



## POST-16 PROVISION



## LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE



# OFSTED | SUPPORTING SAFEGUARDING

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in “Meeting” this area as follows:**

“Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Their voices are heard, including the voices of pupils who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day). Teaching pupils about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils and parents know who to go to for support.”

Each week, students are encouraged to speak up on a range of topical and often sensitive issues. These may be affecting them directly or indirectly, and provide staff with an opportunity to understand their perspectives and the external influences that might be affecting these.

All VotesforSchools lessons remind students to speak to trusted adults wherever possible if there is something that is impacting them (or one of their peers) negatively, and they are also given consistent signposting to external support agencies such as Childline.

As a whole, VotesforSchools advocates for self-safeguarding amongst students, empowering them to speak up and to feel confident articulating their emotions. More information on this can be found in our policy document on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

“Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils’ own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).”

The topics of bullying, respectful / healthy relationships, and abuse are frequently discussed as part of VotesforSchools. Students are invited to discuss the hallmarks of healthy relationships and how to identify when these characteristics are absent in theirs or others’ situations. They are also informed of the law underpinning issues such as physical violence, harassment and abuse, both as part of the weekly resources and the supplementary PSHE/RSHE materials provided as part of a school’s subscription.



# OFSTED | SUPPORTING INCLUSION

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Leaders and staff establish strategies that consistently enhance the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.”**

VotesforSchools’ aim is to engage all students, no matter their ability or background. The weekly resources are designed to spark conversation about the biggest issues affecting students from the classroom to the wider world. This focus on current, relevant topic coverage means that students feel empowered to share their own perspectives and learn from their peers. It also provides opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge of wider-world opportunities in ways that might not be as easily achieved through conventional curriculum means.

In sum, VotesforSchools’ lessons are specifically designed to bring all students into the conversation and give equal opportunities for their voices to be heard. This not only improves their understanding of democracy, but also their interpersonal relationships.

**“Leaders and staff rigorously monitor the progress of these pupils and consistently ensure that any barriers to success are swiftly and effectively addressed. Strategies are systematically and skilfully adjusted as needed, so that they make a sustained difference to pupils’ opportunities and experiences. Well-analysed, quantitative and qualitative data underpins leaders’ decisions.”**

VotesforSchools provides staff with all the tools they need to monitor students’ engagement in classroom conversations on current issues. Through the platform, staff can see which classes have voted and on which topics they have engaged. Staff also have full access to individual class data on each topic, as well as their school as a whole: this gives unique insight into the issues that students feel most strongly about, and helps staff to pinpoint areas that might need further intervention (e.g. bullying, misogyny, or child poverty). This then has the knock-on effect of allowing staff to act in the interests of their students

using informed and timely evidence that is broken down by different demographics.

In addition to the data provided by the platform, schools are also provided with VoteDiaries for students to use to record their own progress over the course of the academic year. This helps students and staff alike to assess gaps in students' knowledge and to proactively seek out ways to fill these gaps. As a result, students feel more courageous in their convictions and leaders are able to make necessary adjustments with confidence.

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

“Exceptional standards of inclusion have been sustained over time so that barriers to learning and/or well-being for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, are reduced exceptionally well to ensure highly positive outcomes and experiences for pupils.”

VotesforSchools is specifically designed to not only be a whole-school solution, but also a year-round solution that helps to embed an appreciation for open discussion, trustworthy information, and lifelong learning. By utilising the programme on a long-term basis, schools see a marked difference in students' ability - and willingness - to engage with their peers and in the classroom; the barriers to entry are removed as there is “something for everyone” in the topics discussed, and each lesson helps to promote oracy, inclusion and proactive citizenship.

“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on how well these pupils achieve and thrive across all areas of school life, and have ensured that they feel they belong within the school community.”

“Whole-school” solution does not only apply to students, but to staff too: if staff are shown to be engaging with and enthusiastic about hearing students' opinions on key issues, this enhances students' learning and enthusiasm to participate. The voting aspect of the programme in particular instils a strong sense of belonging for students: their voices are being included as part of their class, their school, their local area and society as a whole. This helps to ensure that students feel like a part of something bigger than themselves.



# OFSTED | SUPPORTING CURRICULUM & TEACHING

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Leaders ensure that the curriculum is of a consistently high quality across subjects and year groups. Leaders have a sophisticated understanding of the differences between subjects, so that pupils’ learning at each stage can be secured quickly and shaped carefully in the anticipation of future learning.”**

VotesforSchools provides schools with high-quality resources that can be further enhanced through localised adaptation where required, both in terms of subjects and year groups, as well as on a geographical basis - for example, if crime is a pervasive problem in a local community, staff may wish to include some recent statistics from the police force to deepen students’ understanding of the issue.

The ready-to-use nature of VotesforSchools thereby gives staff time to build their understanding of the topic for discussion and reflect on how it interlinks with other curriculum areas without them also having to plan and create the lessons themselves. Not only this, but the weekly nature of the resources means that schools can utilise them to address problems or questions in their school communities as and when - or even before - they arise.

**“Leaders ensure that the curriculum is consistently taught well. Highly effective teaching is embedded across subjects and year groups. Teaching ensures that pupils consistently develop their language and vocabulary, both spoken and written, and increase their reading competency, across subjects.”**

On a macro level, VotesforSchools ensures consistency across year groups / phases as all students are discussing the same topics, using the same resources (often at the same time).

And, on a more micro level, VotesforSchools lessons introduce students to a range of new concepts and accompanying terminology, which helps to build their understanding of the topic at hand and encourages them to apply this knowledge across the curriculum too. There are a range of activities provided in the lessons that promote speaking, writing, reading and listening skills.

“The school’s approach to the curriculum and teaching for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being is implemented consistently well across the school to remove barriers to achievement for these pupils.”

As a whole-school solution, VotesforSchools is inclusive by design: it promotes setting-wide conversations in which every voice counts - figuratively and literally. This gives disadvantaged students an opportunity to participate alongside their peers on a level playing field. As a result, they reinforce their confidence, interpersonal skills and understanding of their valued place in the world. The result is a positive knock-on effect on wellbeing and attainment.

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

“Exceptionally high standards in the curriculum and teaching have been sustained. Across all subjects and phases, well-planned, effective and highly responsive teaching quickly and securely develops the knowledge and skills pupils need to be successful.”

VotesforSchools’ weekly provision ensures that staff are provided with responsive but well-planned and curriculum-ready resources to help students understand key issues in the wider world. By using the lessons across year groups, staff are able to assess potential gaps in understanding and also experiential gaps - KS1 students may have very different thoughts on tests to KS2; Year 8s might feel more strongly about climate change than their Year 11 counterparts. As a result of seeing this differentiation in perspectives on a regular basis and in great detail, staff can respond accordingly with their own lesson planning and curriculum design that puts students’ views at the centre.

“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on the learning of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to learning and/or well-being. These pupils are now exceptionally well prepared for current and later learning, and for future success.”

By engaging all students with current affairs and issues affecting them in their day-to-day lives through VotesforSchools lessons, staff are equipping their young people with the skills and values needed to excel in later learning and to find future success that they may not otherwise be able to access. This curiosity and appetite for continued knowledge-building permeates school culture when the programme is used to its fullest, helping staff to transform the attitudes to learning of all students (and perhaps fellow staff too).

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING ACHIEVEMENT

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

“Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, consistently achieve well, develop detailed knowledge and skills, and produce high-quality work across the curriculum.”

Although VotesforSchools covers a different topic each week, it asks that students make connections between the knowledge they have from previous topics and discussions and the knowledge they acquire with each new lesson. This in turn builds key competencies such as critical thinking, and also reinforces - or perhaps challenges - their understanding of the wider world. They also build healthy democratic habits through weekly voting, which helps prepare them to be responsible and proactive citizens.

VotesforSchools regularly invites students to articulate their thoughts and ideas through discussion-, speaking- and writing-based activities that require planning, teamwork and imagination. The skills developed here can then be applied elsewhere in the curriculum, alongside their breadth and depth of knowledge.

**“All pupils, including the groups above, are consistently well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training.”**

VotesforSchools consistently provides students with opportunities to better understand their values, motivations, and sense of place in the wider world. This helps them to reflect on their aspirations and what matters to them. The weekly activities also focus on communication, teamwork and participation, which helps create well-rounded individuals who have the skills that will aid them in further study and will be valued by future employers.

They are given practical advice regarding education, employment and training through topics which focus on educational reform, transition and change, and career pathways, and the weekly feedback from key stakeholders broadens

their horizons regarding the types of jobs and careers available once they leave education.

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

“Exceptionally high standards of achievement have been sustained. Across all subjects and phases, pupils achieve consistently well, developing detailed knowledge and skills. This will be reflected in consistently high outcomes in national tests and examinations (where available).”

Because VotesforSchools offers weekly provision to schools, high standards can be easily set, monitored, and therefore maintained across classes and across the school. Staff can utilise the skills developed by the programme as a benchmark for other areas of the curriculum; for example, how well a student can articulate themselves in a VotesforSchools discussion should therefore be emulated - if not improved upon - as part of a speaking assessment in English.

Students’ achievements and areas for improvement can be tracked by teachers on a weekly basis through the sessions, but can also be assessed by students themselves via the VotesforSchools VoteDiary. This allows students to reflect on their voting so far, and where they might like to improve their understanding of different subjects. These are transferable skills that will help them in preparing for exams or other assessments.

“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. These pupils now achieve consistently high outcomes and are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps. The difference between the attainment rate of the school’s disadvantaged pupils and that of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally is far narrower over time than the difference between the attainment rate of all disadvantaged pupils nationally and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.”

VotesforSchools seeks to level the playing field by providing all students with the same information about a topic, and equal opportunities to have their say. Consequently, barriers to attainment are removed and those who may otherwise be at a disadvantage are able to grow in confidence and see the benefits of participation to their learning.

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOUR

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Leaders and staff have established a culture that is highly conducive to learning, in which pupils of all ages flourish. Leaders respond to the school’s and pupils’ changing circumstances and needs swiftly and skilfully.”**

VotesforSchools lessons promote a culture of inclusion, openness and respect, all of which are conducive to learning that benefits all students and allows them to find their voice. Because of its weekly nature and current affairs focus, VotesforSchools is able to reflect the key concerns of schools, staff, and students in its resources, giving space for these vital conversations. As a result, staff feel confident that they are responsive to students’ needs, students feel like they are being listened to and represented in school, and schools are able to provide consistent and clear messaging by all discussing the same issue at the same time using the same material. This creates a positive feedback loop of students wanting to participate in conversations, and staff being able to use this enthusiasm to boost learning outcomes.

**“Pupils show self-discipline and dedication to their learning. They learn how to manage their own emotions and resolve conflict with others. They consistently show high levels of respect for others and rarely need to be reminded about positive behaviour. Older pupils’ behaviour, including consideration for others, sets an excellent example.”**

VotesforSchools as a whole has a significant focus on boosting the emotional literacy and holistic wellbeing of young people; its focus on advocacy for individuals and on behalf of others instills in students a sense of justice and helps them to articulate what is fair or unfair. They are also shown how to channel these strong emotions in a positive way, by using their voices to share what they think. Knowing that their views are being heard also helps to mitigate feelings of apathy or frustration.

Not only this, but the very premise of classroom discussion is founded on mutual respect and openness to alternative views. Students are able to



embody these principles through their weekly debates, as a wide range of opinions are always represented and given equal consideration. It is implicit in the resources that discrimination and disrespect have no place in the conversation, which helps to support schools' aims of promoting these values.

**“Tailored and responsive reasonable adjustments and adaptations, interventions and/or support for pupils who need help to improve their behaviour have a demonstrable impact.”**

The weekly resources from VotesforSchools are entirely adaptable, meaning staff are able to edit them according to the needs of their students if required. This could include adding localised context to a statistics-based activity, or it could be changing a class activity to a pair activity to accommodate necessary interventions.

Additionally, VotesforSchools lessons in and of themselves are not static, either metaphorically or literally: because of their current nature, students always have something to say about the issue at hand. This incentivises participation and allows them to contribute to the wider conversation in a positive way. And, they are also regularly asked to complete “active” tasks, such as putting their hands up, giving gestures to show their answers, or moving around the room. This physical aspect to learning can be very helpful in ensuring that students are consistently engaged in their learning - it literally keeps them on their toes.

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Exceptional standards of attendance and behaviour have been sustained over time so that there is a highly inclusive culture in which all pupils feel that they belong. Pupils who need it receive exceptional and tailored support from highly skilled staff to improve their attendance and behaviour, with perceptible results.”**

The promise of talking about something that matters to students can and does provide an incentive to potentially reluctant learners. VotesforSchools covers a different topic every week, creating a sense of intrigue for students about what will be up for discussion from one week to the next. This can have a positive impact on attendance and behaviour, as students feel galvanised to participate and want to be part of the conversation. It also means that there is

a “clean slate” in terms of learning each week, so students who may have missed lessons will not feel excluded from the conversation; if anything it is an opportunity for them to start afresh and contribute their opinions in a meaningful way, perhaps even adding perspectives that their peers might not otherwise have considered.

VotesforSchools materials are also fully editable, meaning they can be adapted for students no matter their learning context. For instance, if a student were to be in isolation, they would still be able to feel part of the wider discussion because they would know that their peers were also sharing their views on it at the same time.

**“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on how well disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being achieve and flourish across all areas of school life.”**

Discussions about topical and/or sensitive issues should be the preserve of all students, and this is a principle VotesforSchools upholds in all of its resources. By using the lessons with all students, schools are able to boost inclusion and ensure everyone recognises their place and perspective as equally important. This can help to catalyse confidence amongst disadvantaged or underrepresented students and create cohesion across the whole school.

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & WELL-BEING

---

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

“Pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge across the personal, social, health and economic education, relationships and (where relevant) sex education programme and citizenship curriculum.”

Every week, VotesforSchools materials are mapped to the following curriculum areas, so that schools are supported in providing breadth and depth of knowledge:

- PSHE & RSHE
- SMSC
- British Values
- Prevent
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

Coupled with its current affairs focus, this enables students to consolidate learning from across the curriculum and helps them to prepare for life beyond the classroom.

Additional to the weekly resources on which students vote are VotesforSchools’ supplementary PSHE & RSHE and assembly materials. These help schools to reinforce learning around key areas such as nicotine, misogyny or voting as and when they need it (or even preemptively). As a result, students feel empowered to speak up on key issues and are well-informed about the different opinions they might encounter on these subjects. This helps them to be more resilient to those who disagree with them, and to build relationships based on respect and understanding even if they do not agree on some issues.

**“Pupils are confident, resilient and independent. They are reflective, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. They are very well prepared for life beyond school.”**

VotesforSchools’ weekly resources help to support a wide range of skills that contribute to character development in students. These include confidence, empathy, oracy, independence and resilience. Through regular debate and discussion, students are given a safe space to explore social and political issues, and build skills of tolerance, respect, compassion, listening to others, and hearing views that are opposed to their own or those of their family/friends. They are also then given the results of previous votes, which provides them with a chance to reflect on the outcomes of their decisions and to understand the power of speaking up - both as an individual and as a collective.

In terms of preparing them for life beyond school, there are a range of relevant topics spread over the course of the academic year that broaden students’ horizons. They cover a range of subjects that support their understanding of physical and mental health, from vaping to vaccines, anxiety to alcohol. They also explore the contributing factors in society that might impact their holistic health, such as money worries, loneliness, and food access.

**“Leaders and staff have a deep understanding of all their pupils and are systematic in anticipating and identifying which individuals or groups might need additional pastoral support. What is provided is highly effective.”**

Students are regularly reminded of the importance of healthy, positive relationships both with their peers and adults through their VotesforSchools sessions. The materials consistently signpost them towards the trusted adults in their lives if and when they are feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unhappy about something they have seen or experienced.

Furthermore, the protected characteristics are highlighted in their resources through the imagery and terminology used in the resources, and resources regularly cover issues around prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. This reinforces their understanding of what protected characteristics are and the laws that are in place to keep them and others safe from discriminatory treatment. It also helps staff to identify any potential safeguarding risks as they are able to assess students’ responses to different subject matter.

When it comes to voting, the results are split into Male, Female and Diverse options, as well as by class and year group. This distribution of data can help schools to understand when different demographics might be in need of more

support. For instance, if a topic on mental wellbeing around exam time showed that older students were more prone to stress, schools could act on this by introducing additional pastoral support. Similarly, if a school's results indicated that girls were less likely to engage in physical activity, they might look to explore the reasons behind this further so that the curriculum or pedagogical approach could be adapted.

**“Secondary-age pupils have a wide range of opportunities to learn about their options for education, support and training after school. The school engages well with employers in the local area to ensure that pupils are well informed. Pupils know what they need to do to achieve their ambitions.”**

VotesforSchools' weekly current affairs focus allows all students to engage in learning that goes beyond the classroom. The sessions cover predominantly youth-centric topics or areas in which students' voices have not yet been sufficiently heard. The diversity of topics from the 9 Key Themes ensures all students have ample opportunity to discover an issue or subject that they may not have been introduced to previously.

On a practical level, via regular references to relevant careers or suggested ways to “be heard”, VotesforSchools also 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.

**“The programme of personal development is extensive and carefully tailored to the school's context and pupils' aspirations. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face barriers to their learning and/or well-being, participate and benefit fully.”**

The inclusive nature of VotesforSchools means that the opportunity to have their voices heard is open to all students - as such, it becomes a crucial part of school culture. This is especially pertinent for those with SEND, as they are able to offer their own perspectives and opinions on issues, especially those more pertinent to their lived experiences.

**“Evidence of the impact of the personal development programme is clear on the outcomes and experiences of pupils, including the groups of pupils listed above.”**

VotesforSchools lessons cover a new topic every week. This breadth of topic coverage allows students with a diverse range of interests to discuss something about which they are passionate and/or discover other issues that matter to them. No matter the length of their sessions, students feel confident that there will be time each week for them to develop their knowledge, question their existing opinions or ideas, and have their say. This is then often reflected in their willingness to participate elsewhere in school, and how they are able to articulate their thoughts, feelings and reasoning within their work.

This is best summed up by a VotesforSchools subscriber, who recently said: “This is such a brilliant resource that helps our students develop their oracy and critical thinking skills and, most importantly, see themselves as global citizens and changemakers. We love it!”

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Exceptionally high standards of personal development and well-being have been sustained. Pupils feel well supported, develop consistently detailed knowledge and skills, make a strong positive contribution to the school’s inclusive culture and are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps and for life beyond school.”**

VotesforSchools is an important tool in sustaining high levels of personal development, as its weekly nature allows students to consistently keep building upon their opinions, learning how to speak up, and reflecting on what matters to them and how this differs from what matters to their peers. It also creates a cohesion within schools as students are better able to relate to reach other and understand that our differences and similarities hold equal value.

In terms of life beyond school, the impact of contributing to a bigger conversation on which young people are heard cannot be overstated: students are shown that, every single week, their voices have been listened to and often acted upon by key decisionmakers. Because of this they recognise the value of their voice not only as an individual but as part of a bigger whole - their class, their school, their local area, their country. This sense of belonging pays dividends, allowing students to feel empowered to take their next steps - whether that is to a new school, further education, or the world of work.



“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on the personal development and well-being of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. These pupils are now able to thrive in school and beyond the school.”

Within the VotesforSchools resources, students are consistently presented with information that show the benefits of equality of opportunity and diversity of experience. Below are just some of the ways this is achieved:

- **Topic coverage:** Through the specific theme of Equalities & identity, students are able to gain a deeper understanding of the injustices still facing communities in the UK and worldwide, and what can be done to mitigate these;
- **Imagery:** VotesforSchools resources are thoroughly checked to ensure that the people and places portrayed are diverse and expose students to different cultures and customs;
- **Insights:** Lived experiences are crucial to understanding the topical issues of the day, so VotesforSchools resources ensure that genuine (and often verbatim) insights are used as much as possible in order to paint a realistic picture of the issue at hand;
- **Role models:** Wherever possible, resources showcase trailblazing individuals and their change-making work so that students can feel empowered to make a difference themselves, no matter their background. In addition, feedback on topics is often provided by individuals from a range of sectors, helping to introduce students to different career paths;
- **Awareness Days:** By marking different events - such as LGBT History Month or Refugee Week - VotesforSchools resources reinforce the role raising awareness has in tackling injustices worldwide. These events also provide an opportunity for collective celebration that can break down any perceived borders between communities.

Additionally, VotesforSchools provides all students with the chance to participate more broadly in Student Voice initiatives and actively encourages participation from a diverse range of young people. These initiatives include:

- Contributing to **Youth Ambassador meetings** to discuss key topics
- Attending **in-person and/or online events** to share their insights on topical/youth-focused issues
- Submitting **blogs or articles** to be featured on the platform.

Students’ participation in these initiatives is contingent on staff engagement with the programme.

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING EARLY YEARS

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**The voting platform is open to Reception-age students and their staff, where schools judge it to be developmentally appropriate for the cohorts in their setting.**

Although EYFS provision is not explicitly supported, the resources can still be used where appropriate to help support high-quality interactions during the school day and to encourage students to engage with their peers and other members of staff.

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING POST-16 PROVISION

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

“Leaders ensure that the curriculum is taught consistently well across all 16 to 19 study programmes. They carefully analyse its impact and make astute adaptations as needed.”

Through its 16+/College provision, VotesforSchools gives sixth-form students the opportunity to engage in the same conversations as their younger counterparts, but with an emphasis on more advanced language, questions, and concepts. Through weekly discussions, students can see their awareness of the world expanding, allowing them to envisage new and motivating pathways for themselves.

“Teachers are skilled at delivering the curriculum in a way that enables students to achieve well. The choices teachers make about what to teach, and when and how to teach it, are highly effective in the context of the subject and the needs of students.”

As either a 15-minute or a 45-minute lesson, VotesforSchools is flexible for staff to use in a way that best suits their timetabling. In some instances, it is especially effective as a plenary for a PSHE or citizenship lesson, as it encourages students to consider how what they are learning translates into the real world. Elsewhere, it is a form time catalyst, helping students to engage with a topical issue with their peers and discuss it openly - a little like they might do at break or lunchtimes. Staff can use their professional judgment to assess when the resources will have the most impact, and how students might engage with them.

Not only this, but the subject matter of VotesforSchools' materials - whether weekly, from the lessons archive or the additional PSHE provision - can be utilised to contextualise wider world issues for students, including those impacting their school directly. This shows that their views matter and that their priorities are being reflected in what they are learning.

**“Students are very well prepared for later life and proceed to highly appropriate education, employment or training.”**

When respect underpins the learning environment, students are more likely to feel positively about themselves and their education. Respect for others is intrinsic to VotesforSchools, and is promoted throughout all our resources. As a result, this permeates the discussions being had and therefore the wider learning environment. A culture of respect for others is then cultivated, whether this is for their opinions, their life experiences, or their choices. This provides students with a sense of camaraderie, helping them to cooperate more effectively. Plus, the resources ask students to apply independent thought that is resilient to other perspectives, and to stand firm in their values. All of these skills and attributes will be of great value when they enter the next phase of their lives.

**“Students, including disadvantaged students, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, achieve well, develop detailed knowledge and skills and produce high-quality work across the curriculum. This prepares them well for more advanced study.”**

VotesforSchools resources are designed to be appropriate and accessible to all, and will provide students with different ideas or insights depending on their background. These ideas and insights are all upheld as equally valid, and students are encouraged to share them with their peers. This helps them to prepare for the more in-depth discussion and critical thinking skills required for advanced study, and also helps improve their understanding of the wider world in a way they may not otherwise be able to access.

**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving an “Exceptional” grading in this area as follows:**

**“Exceptionally high standards of leadership, curriculum, teaching, achievement, personal development and well-being have been sustained. This means that students achieve consistently well, develop detailed knowledge and skills and are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps and later life.”**

VotesforSchools provides staff with an opportunity to demonstrate progressive and representative leadership by not shying away from sensitive issues. This

willingness to tackle issues head-on also has a positive impact on the curriculum as it enriches what students learn and helps to broaden their horizons. By making space for students to discuss issues that are important to them, the value of their opinions and ideas is made implicit in the culture of the school; they know that they can speak up when they need to and advocate for themselves and others.

In turn, this positive attitude towards school and staff is likely to be reflected in their attainment and their aptitude for building knowledge that is based in objective fact and diversity of opinion. This positive attitude towards open discussion, collaboration and reliable information will be central to their next steps, such as essay-writing, research, job applications, or the world of work.

**“Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged students, students with SEND, students who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. These students now achieve and thrive.”**

Barriers to learning are something VotesforSchools seeks to dismantle, as the lessons position all opinions, perspectives and experiences as equal to each other in terms of validity. By giving students the space to safely - and consistently - express these ideas, they are shown the importance of self-safeguarding, advocacy and engaging with their peers (even those with whom they don’t agree).

# OFSTED | SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

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**VotesforSchools can support settings in achieving a “Strong Standard” grading in this area as follows:**

“Leaders use their detailed and insightful analysis of school performance to evaluate the effectiveness of their provision. They accurately identify, monitor and act on priorities for improvement, leading to consistently strong standards across all areas of the school’s work or rapid improvement in any areas where this is not the case.”

VotesforSchools provides school leaders with a crucial tool to enhance their provision: weekly insight into the hearts and minds of their student body. Every week, students discuss a key issue in their classrooms - a discussion that culminates in a vote. The results of a school’s vote (as well as the specific votes from across individual classes, year groups and genders) are visible to all staff using the platform from week to week.

From these results, staff can clearly identify their students’ attitudes towards a broad range of issues, from bullying to the school curriculum to exam stress. Staff are then ideally placed to seek further insights from students or to make decisions for their school that reflect the changes students want/need.

And the data gathered through VotesforSchools is not only useful for issues that need solving: it also helps schools to identify what they are doing well and any initiatives to which students are especially receptive. This can help staff to uphold existing high standards and continue to strive for improvement.

“Leaders have developed a highly effective culture of professional learning and expertise in which staff take responsibility for their own learning and are keen to continually improve their expertise. Leaders ensure that there is a professional learning and expertise curriculum that is informed by the best available evidence, including research, and is precisely matched to priorities for whole-school improvement, subjects/teams/phases and individual needs.”

Through using VotesforSchools resources each week, staff are learning about key issues affecting young people as well as students! In having these conversations, staff can then explore the areas which they would like to learn



about, such as the online world or pop culture, which in turn will support students' learning. What's more, VotesforSchools also offers an Education Advisory Board, the meetings for which always include sharing of best practice amongst staff who use the programme. Participation in the EAB highlights staff's commitment to continued development.

# ISI | SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

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“Leadership must ensure that the school’s aims and ethos (including any religious ethos and/or boarding principles) are available in writing to parents and staff, and are known to pupils, and are seen to work well in practice.”

When schools first sign up to VotesforSchools, they are directed to the platform Handbook for further information about successful implementation. This Handbook includes a pro forma document for parents, outlining the aims and ethos of VotesforSchools. There are also Introductory Lessons for both staff and students outlining the parameters of the programme, which could also be shared with parents.

On a weekly basis, the Data Report and weekly email newsletter could also be shared with the wider school network if required.

“Leadership must ensure effective and consistent implementation of all policies and documents required by standards applicable to the school, and that policies comply with relevant legislation, have regard to applicable guidance, and are understood by staff and pupils. Leadership must ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.”

VotesforSchools closely follows any guidance issued by the DfE, particularly Political Impartiality in Schools (2022). Additionally, all resources make clear that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated and must be tackled accordingly. As part of a VotesforSchools subscription, staff can also access protected characteristics display materials to help schools be fully transparent about what these are and what is expected of them.

“The proprietor must ensure that leaders and managers have the skills, knowledge and understanding to actively promote the wellbeing of all pupils through taking a strategic, comprehensive and inclusive approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils’ wellbeing. As a result, leadership must safeguard and promote the wellbeing of pupils through effectively identifying risk of harm and take appropriate action to reduce risks that are identified. Pupils’ (including any boarders’) health needs must be met, and their physical and emotional wellbeing actively promoted.”

VotesforSchools regularly covers issues that pose a threat to students, including knife crime, vaping, or county lines. These kinds of lessons provide students with a safe space to discuss issues that are affecting them or people they know, and equip them with the knowledge and skills to self-safeguard.

More broadly, VotesforSchools also encourages open conversations about all issues. This not only gives students the confidence to speak up when they are worried, but also reassures them that their thoughts and opinions are valid, irrespective of subject matter.

“This may include adapting existing risk strategies as necessary to identify and manage the risk to pupils’ wellbeing of pupils experiencing harmful behaviours and attitudes. In some cases, these risks may be harder to spot, and less obvious to existing risk mitigation strategies. Therefore, leadership should have the appropriate skills and knowledge to ensure that they appreciate and understand the prevalence of potentially harmful behaviours, and therefore do not consider avoidable harms unavoidable. Leaders and managers should understand their own influence and role in risk management and the prevention of harm(s) which may negatively impact pupils’ wellbeing.”

By having regular, open conversations about risky behaviours and dangerous attitudes during VotesforSchools sessions, staff are able to better indicate to students that they are open to non-judgmental discussions either on a one-to-one or class-wide basis. This may then give vulnerable students the confidence to speak up should they need to.

From a safeguarding point of view, having these open conversations can also help to identify vulnerable students; by seeking the opinions of all students during VotesforSchools sessions, it is easier for members of staff to identify patterns of behaviour or attitudes that could pose a risk to the individual student or their peers.

Lastly, VotesforSchools also maps all VoteTopics to the Government's Prevent Strategy, meaning the resources are specifically designed to bolster existing safeguarding and counter-extremism provision.

**"In fulfilling their responsibilities effectively and consistently, leadership should be aware that positive feedback from the majority of pupils can mask smaller groups of pupils, or individual pupils who have harmful, but hidden, negative experiences. Leaders and managers should take a proactive approach, as indicated by the wording of the Standards, to promote the wellbeing of all pupils."**

Crucially, VotesforSchools gives all students an opportunity to have their say on the issues that matter. The regular sessions make clear to students the importance of being viewed as an individual and why it is important that everyone shares their experiences as part of these discussions. All students are encouraged to listen carefully to one another and to look out for those for whom some issues may be sensitive or have negative connotations.

# ISI | SUPPORTING PUPILS' EDUCATION, TRAINING & RECREATION

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“The quality of education, training and recreation, which includes pupil progress, is fundamental to the evaluation of a school’s provision for pupils. It is central in both the Standards and the statutory definition of pupil wellbeing. Therefore, it forms a prominent part of the evaluation during the inspection and reporting process.”

VotesforSchools provides schools with a range of resources to help track student progress:

- **An individual VoteDiary** allows each student to monitor their own progress and evaluate the ways in which they have developed in skills such as critical thinking, speaking & listening, and persuasive writing
- **Weekly curriculum guides** give teachers a vital snapshot of the areas that are being covered by each topic
- **Half-termly curriculum overviews** collate all the areas that have been covered by the VoteTopics each term.

“Leadership must ensure that all pupils’ education and experience of the school’s curriculum results from leaders’ effective implementation of appropriate plans, schemes of work, and programmes of activities that are appropriate to pupils’ needs in the following areas: Linguistic; Mathematical; Scientific; Technological; Human & Social; Physical; Aesthetic & Creative; Speaking, Listening, Literacy & Numeracy, so that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.”

VotesforSchools helps to support students’ holistic education and development. It does so in the following ways:

- **Linguistic:** All unfamiliar or new vocabulary used in each resource is defined for students to see. For students aged 5-7/in KS1, there are also regular opportunities to look at phonics in greater detail.
- **Mathematical & Scientific:** Each week, students are shown the outcome of the previous vote through a pie chart that breaks down the Yes-No vote and details how many students voted overall. There is also regular reference to other data and statistics, as well as links to the Maths and

Science curriculum through topics aligned to the VotesforSchools key themes of Health & Wellbeing, Science & Technology, and Jobs, Economy & Education.

- **Technological:** Given its rapid advancements, technology is a topic regularly discussed with students, thereby improving their awareness of how to harness it and the ways in which it can both enhance and be detrimental to our daily lives. On a practical level, the VotesforSchools platform also helps familiarise students with another digital service and reinforces their knowledge of how to communicate digitally.
- **Human & Social:** Human and social issues are central to the discussions prompted by VotesforSchools, so students are given regular opportunities to speak about how different issues are affecting the world and society of which they are a part. These discussions also help them to build their own social skills and to recognise the rights and responsibilities they have as human beings.
- **Physical:** Resources on the VotesforSchools Key Theme of Health & Wellbeing always promote the benefits of physical activity and sport. Within the sessions themselves, students are regularly asked to stand up and move around the room, which builds an appreciation for active learning in a very literal sense.
- **Aesthetic & Creative:** From making posters to speed-debating, VotesforSchools offers a range of creative activities to students. It also promotes creative problem-solving and highlights the importance of getting your message across clearly and convincingly.
- **Speaking, Listening, Literacy & Numeracy:** The development of all of these skills is central to VotesforSchools sessions. Students are given ample opportunity to share their views and to actively listen to the thoughts and ideas of others - be that their peers or individuals/groups cited in the resources. They are also encouraged to reflect on the information given to them, and to critically evaluate this to answer questions and reach an informed opinion on an issue.



**“Leadership must ensure that pupils’ experience of the curriculum takes into account pupils’ ages, aptitudes and needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.”**

VotesforSchools provides resources for students aged 5 through to 18, with each level differentiated according to key stage/age group. Aesthetically speaking, the imagery used is representative of the age group for whom the resources are intended, allowing students to feel seen.

Pedagogically, elements that provide additional support to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (such as keyword definitions) and stimuli for those with high attainment (such as challenge boxes) are added to all resources. Plus, VotesforSchools resources are issued in PowerPoint format, making them easily editable for staff. Many existing subscribers use them in conjunction with other software (such as Widgit Symbols) or edit font sizes and colours to accommodate students’ specific needs.

**“Leadership must ensure that:**

- **Teaching -**
  - enables all pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability and does not discriminate against pupils or promote partisan political views
  - does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- A framework is in place to evaluate pupils’ work and performance regularly and thoroughly, which refers to:
  - the school’s aims as provided to parents, and/or
  - national norms
- Particulars of the school’s academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations, are made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils.”

With regards to Teaching, VotesforSchools:

- **Allows staff to observe** students’ development in public speaking/oracy, critical thinking, and political & media literacy
- **Encourages students to share** their views openly, without fear of judgement; there is no “right” or “wrong” response
- **Does not support or campaign for any political issue or candidate** - it allows students to reach their own opinion based on objective and balanced facts\*

- Specifically maps each VoteTopic to British Values, so staff can be confident that these are being covered thoroughly and on a regular basis
- Promotes fundamental British Values and consistently highlights the importance of these to students.

Concerning Framework, VotesforSchools:

- Has aims of nurturing informed and curious students who actively want to be heard which are in keeping with the broader national aims outlined in a range of curriculum areas, such as Citizenship, PSHE, RSHE, British Values and Prevent
- Allows students and staff to evaluate their progress using VoteDiaries.

While VotesforSchools cannot speak directly to the “**particulars of the school’s academic performance**”, it is possible to share what students thought of a particular topic with parents and carers or other stakeholders via the weekly Data Reports. Alternatively, results specific to a school or group of schools can be found on the platform; this helps build a clear picture of students’ attitudes towards different issues (like climate change, consent, or careers).

*\*For more on this, please see VotesforSchools’ Political Impartiality in Schools Guidance document.*

“Leadership must ensure that teachers at the school:

- plan lessons well
  - demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught, and
  - with understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils, gained from regular and thorough assessment of pupils’ work
- use effective teaching methods and activities
- manage class time and pupils’ behaviour well
- use a range of good quality classroom resources well

so that all pupils acquire new knowledge, increase their understanding, and develop their skills (make good progress) according to their ability in the subjects taught, and

- are interested in their work
- apply intellectual, physical and creative effort
- act responsibly
- are self-motivated, thinking and learning for themselves.”

With regards to **Planning**, VotesforSchools:

- **Provides** staff with pre-planned, zero-prep lessons that save them time on a weekly basis, thereby reducing workload. All the information provided has been fact-checked and quality-assured, so that staff and students alike know that they are being given impartial ideas and insights
- **Empowers** staff with all the necessary contextual knowledge needed to discuss a topic openly and effectively. The resources give staff the confidence to deliver sessions on issues that may not be directly in their area of expertise, such as the online world or youth trends. Over time, staff feel more literate in the issues affecting young people today
- **Allows** staff to edit the resources at their discretion; they can make any necessary modifications based on their class' existing awareness and/or ability.

Concerning **Teaching Methods**, VotesforSchools:

- Promotes **active questioning** from both staff and students
- Provides a **wide range of activities** to help keep students participating and engaged
- Encourages **open and honest communication** in the classroom
- Allows students to **model active democracy and citizenship** through the voting process at the end of each session.

VotesforSchools helps with **Class Time & Behaviour Management** by:

- Issuing lessons that follow a **consistent time limit** each week
- Providing **realistic timescales** for individual activities
- Using a **range of activities that help to maintain engagement** (such as moving around the classroom or using hand signals to indicate answers)
- Encouraging **all students to participate in discussions**, which helps to build cohesion and harmony in the classroom.

All of the above also contributes to the ways in which staff are assessed in their effective usage of **Quality Resources**.

VotesforSchools is supportive of **Students' Development and Progression** in the following ways:

- The different topics covered mean that students are **all interested in the topic at hand** and enjoy taking part in the discussions and subsequent voting

- Every week, students experience **being informed, curious, and heard**. They recognise the effort required to embody these qualities or actions, but also see the positive outcomes of this
- By **taking turns to listen to others' opinions and ideas**, students learn to be patient and open-minded. They are aware of the impact their views might have on others and the responsibility that comes with making decisions and being an active citizen
- The resources encourage students to **continue the conversation beyond the classroom** and to explore the topic further in their own time.

**“Leadership must ensure that pupils are not discriminated against, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, and must proactively consider the need to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability.”**

The pedagogical and aesthetic choices made in developing VotesforSchools resources aim to be as inclusive as possible and to allow all students to feel empowered to learn and contribute. Plus, the editability of the resources means that they can be made accessible to specific needs as and when required.

Staff can also access protected characteristics display materials as part of their subscription to help schools be fully transparent about what these are and what is expected of them.

**“Leadership should ensure that pupils develop their emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills through the accessible and stimulating environment created by the school.”**

VotesforSchools sessions create an environment that:

- Promotes **open-mindedness**
- Raises awareness of **students' wellbeing**
- Models how to have **respectful discussions and debates** in a group
- Highlights the benefits of **being an active participant** in activities and conversations.

# ISI | SUPPORTING PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

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“Leadership must ensure that the school’s curriculum policy is implemented effectively through appropriate plans and schemes of work which:

- reflect the school’s aims and ethos, and
- encourage mutual trust and respect for other people, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation), and
- develop pupils’ spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding
- actively promote development of pupils’ self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.”

VotesforSchools resources encourage students to see the value - for themselves and others - in understanding, respecting and valuing a variety of experiences. Whether this is building their skills in oracy or public speaking, or finding creative ways to share an issue they care about with their communities, the weekly sessions help to facilitate these opportunities in the classroom and beyond.

Respect for others is also explicitly promoted in a variety of ways through VotesforSchools, namely:

- **Showcasing** a wide range of opinions and alternative behaviours
- **Celebrating** different backgrounds, cultures, and customs
- **Highlighting** the importance of finding common ground and collective action
- **Providing** tools to combat bullying, hate speech, and violence towards others
- **Promoting** the open discussion of harassment and hate crime, and the personal, emotional and legal implications of these.

VotesforSchools is designed to be an engaging resource that empowers students to be inquisitive and courageous in their convictions. The sessions make learning about the wider world fun and accessible so that students feel they have a valid and significant stake in it. A positive by-product of this

engagement is that students improve their knowledge and understanding of moral dilemmas, spiritual practices and awareness of the main questions facing society today. This allows them to feel more confident in their ability to navigate their transition into (young) adulthood.

**“Leadership must ensure that pupils receive either relationships education or relationships and sex education (as applicable) and the latest statutory guidance relating to relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education as set out in the Standards and other relevant legislation is followed.”**

VotesforSchools resources regularly discuss issues around relationships, such as abuse, boundaries/consent, and peer pressure. Such conversations are vital to building a strong foundation for students regarding right and wrong, both on behalf of themselves and others. All resources are developed with the specific age group in mind, but also with an awareness of the kinds of issues that they will realistically be facing in their own lives.

The materials consistently signpost them towards the trusted adults in their lives if and when they are feeling uncomfortable, unsafe, or unhappy about something they have seen or experienced. There are also additional resources available that promote “Healthy Conversations” and “Challenging Conversations”<sup>\*</sup>.

*<sup>\*</sup>These resources are available on the VotesforSchools platform. You can find out more about how VotesforSchools supports PSHE & RSHE through the relevant Primary and Secondary guidance documents.*

**“Leadership must ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is in place which actively prevents and minimises bullying at the school. They should ensure that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively, and staff help children to overcome the impact of bullying. All staff must be trained to recognise and deal with bullying.”**

By promoting alternative views and consistently sharing ways to challenge discriminatory behaviour, VotesforSchools enables staff and students to create - and successfully sustain - a positive learning environment, with the hope that this permeates other areas of the school too. The principles established through these conversations also empower students to feel confident to tackle similar issues online or outside of the classroom.

In sessions focusing specifically on equality, identity, and challenging

prejudice, students are informed of the kinds of attitudes and behaviours that will not be tolerated, both in their school community and in the wider world. They are also equipped with the tools to report these problems in a digital context, such as on social media platforms.

# ISI | SUPPORTING PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELLBEING & CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

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“Leadership must ensure that the school’s curriculum policy is implemented effectively through appropriate plans and schemes of work so that pupils experience human, social and economic education which:

- reflects the school’s aims and ethos
- encourages respect for other people, particularly those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)
- actively promotes fundamental British values
- develops pupils’ social and cultural knowledge and understanding
- gives pupils of secondary age (11+) access to accurate, up-to-date, impartial careers guidance so that they are able to make informed choices about a broad range of careers options and which helps them to fulfil their potential.”

VotesforSchools’ ethos is in line with that of all schools, in that it:

- Promotes inclusion
- Celebrates diversity
- Models respect for others

On a practical level, all resources are mapped to fundamental British Values and to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) criteria. And, though not a specific careers programme, careers education can be enhanced through use of VotesforSchools as:

- The resources **make regular reference to relevant careers or suggested ways to “be heard”**. VotesforSchools also 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.
- The resources **give equal weight to different career paths, and encourage students to pursue the right option(s) for them**. They are also exposed to different careers through the weekly feedback, which often comes from industry experts working in sectors as diverse as food manufacture, climate policy, and the police.



- Debate and discussion is of course intrinsic to VotesforSchools, but so too is the information and insights with which students are equipped. The sessions **highlight the importance of seeking reliable information and having an openness to new perspectives** when discussing challenging topics - everyone in the classroom reaps the benefits when these two guiding principles are followed. These principles can then be applied by students throughout their lives, such as in their further education or in their careers.

**“Leadership must ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.”**

VotesforSchools exists to help nurture informed, active, and curious future citizens who are open-minded, culturally aware, and democratically engaged. By engaging with issues that affect both UK society and the wider world, students build their cultural capital and ability to build relationships with members of their communities.

**“Leadership must actively promote principles at the school which:**

- Enable pupils to
  - distinguish right from wrong
  - respect the civil and criminal law of England
  - acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England
- Encourage pupils to:
  - accept responsibility for their behaviour
  - respect other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics
  - show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated, and to society more widely
  - acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures which furthers and promotes tolerance and respect between different cultural traditions
  - respect democracy and support participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.”

VotesforSchools **enables** students to:

- **Regularly reflect on moral dilemmas and questions** through the VoteTopic question and other questions posed as part of the session
- **Recognise the rule of law** by highlighting topical examples of wrongdoing in the resources
- **Understand the legality of different behaviours** (e.g. drug use, knife crime, hate speech) and the consequences of participating in this kind of behaviour, often through scenario-based learning
- **Discuss public services** such as the NHS, schools, and the emergency services and reflect on what they mean in today's society and how they should be used and/or changed.

VotesforSchools **encourages** students to:

- **Understand the positive outcomes of their behaviour** by seeing the impact that their votes have had and how this is driving decision-making in the wider world (as is shown through weekly feedback on previous VoteTopics)
- **Understand the potential negative outcomes of their behaviour** by encountering fictional scenarios in which wrongdoing has taken place; they must consider what the consequences should be and how this might apply to future situations they find themselves in
- **Respect others by giving space for a diversity of opinions** and experiences and encouraging them to be active and supportive listeners
- **Show initiative by learning about the opportunities available** for them to use their voices. A “call to action” is often central to activities in VotesforSchools resources, which could include setting up groups at school, arranging an event or initiative, or writing to a decision-maker
- **Gain insight into the cultures that differ from their own** by highlighting a range of cultural events in the resources and regularly asking students to consider what they know about these and how they might further their awareness
- **Respect and participate in democracy by voting.** 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 younger generations engaging in politics and community action, and allows them to see (and be) democracy in action. That this vote is then shared with key decision-makers provides students with the understanding that their contribution to society is important, both within their school and as a citizen of a wider community.

**“Where political issues are brought to pupils’ attention, including in the promotion at the school and/or during extra-curricular activities, pupils are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views of political issues, and the promotion of partisan political views is precluded.”**

Every week, VotesforSchools resources facilitate conversations around a Yes-No question. This means there are always (at least) two sides of an argument presented to students, thereby contributing to a more holistic understanding of the topic at hand. Neither side of the debate is presented as having more or less value than the other, and information provided to support each argument is always conveyed in an impartial way\*.

*\*For more on this, please see VotesforSchools’ Political Impartiality in Schools Guidance document.*

**“Leadership must ensure that the schools’ curriculum and teaching does not undermine fundamental British values.”**

VotesforSchools’ mission is to directly provide schools with the tools to allow all staff, regardless of experience or subject specialism, to confidently deliver a consistent and quality approach to British Values for every student.

VotesforSchools’ weekly materials are mapped to British Values (as well as to SMSC and Prevent), meaning that schools can be secure in the knowledge these responsibilities are being supported across all year groups on a weekly basis. Throughout their school journey, students will have ample opportunity to reinforce these values and to reflect on them.

# OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS SUPPORTED BY VOTESFORSCHOOLS

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*The following documents outline the other areas of the curriculum that VotesforSchools supports. You can find these on your Teacher Dashboard.*

## CURRICULUM GUIDE CRITERIA

- SMSC, British Values & Prevent
- UNCRC & UN SDGs
- VotesforSchools' 9 Key Themes

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEWS

- VotesforSchools & SMSC, British Values & Prevent
- VotesforSchools & the PSHE Curriculum
- VotesforSchools & the RSHE Curriculum

*The following documents outline how VotesforSchools can further support you with inspections and/or audits. You can find these on your Teacher Dashboard.*

## POLICY GUIDANCE

- Political Impartiality in Schools
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Schools
- SEND Accessibility & Inclusion in Schools
- VotesforSchools & KCSIE
- VotesforSchools & Character Education
- VotesforSchools & Oracy

## EXTRACURRICULAR GUIDANCE

- VotesforSchools & Unicef's Rights Respecting Schools Award

# PREPARING FOR & REFLECTING ON INSPECTIONS

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*Below is more information about other ways we can help you prepare for future inspections.*

## SUBMIT A QUESTION

- Primary: [primary@votesforschools.com](mailto:primary@votesforschools.com)
- Secondary: [secondary@votesforschools.com](mailto:secondary@votesforschools.com)
- Colleges & FE: [college@votesforschools.com](mailto:college@votesforschools.com)

## BOOK A CALL

Please click [here](#) to book a call with one of our team, or copy & paste this URL into your browser: <https://votesforschools.as.me/schedule/124f90d6>

## SEND US A SUCCESS STORY

We always love to hear when VotesforSchools has helped an inspection go a bit more smoothly. Use the email addresses above to contact us about a success in your setting!

“VotesforSchools has been a valuable resource for us as an SEMH School, working with pupils from different backgrounds and having experienced challenging situations themselves to understand life in the real world. Not sure how we would have managed without it!”

SECONDARY SUBSCRIBER