

Inspection: How does using VotesforSchools support SMSC?

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.

Criteria	VotesforSchools commentary
<p>The proprietor/school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.</p>	<p>Using VotesforSchools as a whole-school package means the active and consistent promotion of British Values. The vote centres on issues (largely British) every week, from Brexit, to Coronavirus, to the refugee crisis. VotesforSchools actively and explicitly promotes British Values as each week voters have their say 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 voters participated. The British Values curriculum as set out in the Government's Guidance on promoting British Values in schools (November 2014) is mapped every week via the Curriculum Guide, demonstrating how that week's topic has directly supported the identified areas.</p>
<p>Enable voters to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools encourages and empowers voters 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. VotesforSchools gives a consistent and quality approach to ensuring that every voter has access to and can engage in discussion around British Values and can develop their critical thinking.</p>



Be informed.



Be curious.



Be heard.



Enable voters to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England.	VotesforSchools is giving voters skills that will stay with them for life: engagement in democracy, how to make your voice heard, how to articulate your opinion, how to listen to others and how to make decisions. The 16+ Lesson specifically develops critical thinking and is more focused on work/apprenticeship and university skills. Through weekly topics, voters are given the skills and tools to be able to identify what is right and wrong; topics such as county lines, alcohol, and extremism allow voters, through current and relevant issues, to identify how the law plays a part in civil society.
Encourage voters to accept responsibility for their behaviour, 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.	VotesforSchools exposes voters to different scenarios both in the UK and beyond that allow them to be able to understand wider community and global issues but also how they can use their democratic right to actively have a voice and make changes. Using VotesforSchools allows young people to also consider how they can enact change, as they are consistently provided with safe and suitable ways to make a difference nationally, locally or within a school setting as part of the lessons and accompanying assemblies.
Enable voters to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.	VotesforSchools regularly works alongside expert organisations to support weekly topics. For example, the resources for COP26 and children's rights (2021) were created in collaboration with UNICEF, with support from a number of other organisations in both the environmental and youth voice sectors. Through their participation, voters are impacting on national policy, understanding that their voice is heard, and seeing that voting is how to bring about change in our democratic system.



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Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures.	VotesforSchools gives teachers the confidence to present topics and actively encourage voters to have differences of opinions. It also models objective and unbiased arguments, demonstrating to voters that any opinion is valid but should be supported with informed evidence. VotesforSchools resources expose voters to a diverse range of topics, and within these is an opportunity for them to make ethical and moral decisions. By looking at different sides of any debate, they develop skills of tolerance, empathy and understanding.
Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.	VotesforSchools' purpose is to embed the skills that through debate and discussion provide young people with tolerance, empathy and understanding, these are the skills that they use to respect diversity. Alongside these skills, VotesforSchools specifically covers topics that align with the Equalities Act 2010.
Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.	VotesforSchools is not just teaching voters about democracy but immersing them in it week after week. Through voting, students experience democracy and the power that their voice can have in bringing about change. VotesforSchools provides weekly feedback to schools on how the votes every school has given have been used to make a difference, reinforcing good habits of democracy for the future.



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<p>Precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school.</p>	<p>VotesforSchools resources provide staff with 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 diverse range of topics. Use of VotesforSchools ensures there is an inclusive and unprejudiced approach to discussing sensitive subjects.</p>
<p>Takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of students - they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.</p>	



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