

Psychology

The Psychology department aspires to empower our students with the skills and ability to critically analyse human behaviour and thinking, resulting in confident learners who will have a life-long thirst for knowledge.

How is the curriculum planned?

In Psychology, students will acquire knowledge and understanding of psychological issues, developing an understanding of self and others, and how psychology can help to explain everyday social phenomena. They will use the skills they acquire to apply psychological theories to real-life settings. They will be given the opportunity to analyse and evaluate theories and studies for strengths and weaknesses, whilst also suggesting recommendations for improvements. Students will be encouraged to make judgements using the evidence presented and develop into reflective thinkers. These skills and knowledge will give students a good base should they wish to continue Psychology when they leave school. There are also many transferrable skills that they will be able to apply to the world of employment such as problem-solving, communication and data analysis.

Psychology is taught at GCSE level from Year 9. Students will begin their GCSE course at this time to ensure that the rigorous content of the new GCSE course is covered in full detail over three years. In Year 9, students will study child development, memory and depression. In Year 10, they study addiction, social behaviour, neuropsychology and research methods. Year 11 will see students continue studying research methods, criminality and sleep & dreaming. Regular use of assessment in the form of exam questions will ensure that students have the skills required to apply their knowledge to scenarios. Time will be spent discussing and planning the structure of exam questions and answers. Structure strips and mark schemes will be used to highlight the key skills and processes involved in each type of answer. Assessment will progressively evolve to ensure that students are able to answer exam questions confidentially and independently over the course of three years, relying less and less on scaffolding.

Psychology has several links to other curriculum areas within the school such as Science, Maths and History. Links are made between subject areas to ensure a uniform approach to vocabulary and knowledge and understanding. Students are able to draw upon their prior learning from Science, for example, when studying Neuropsychology. Similarly, they use their knowledge of medical history when analysing how the study of Psychology has changed over time.

All students (and especially the disadvantaged) need to acquire the cultural capital to help them be more successful in the future and so psychological vocabulary is used frequently to ensure that students have a wider understanding of the world around them. Students study topics looking at the differences between individuals and also different cultures. Students acquire knowledge about how different mental health issues may affect people. They are frequently given the opportunity to link their learning to ecologically valid scenarios.

How is the curriculum delivered/taught?

Pedagogical approaches in Psychology focus on the acquisition of *knowledge*, *application* to real-life scenarios and using *evidence* to make *judgements* about psychological theories and studies. A range

of activities are used within lessons to suit all learners. Students are also given the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical situations by designing and conducting their own psychological experiments. The use of spaced learning in the form of a monthly key-word calendar and regular 'Quick Six' quizzes ensures that students are given plenty of opportunities to embed their prior learning into their memories.

Students are given constructive feedback that allows them to be successful but also focuses on their next steps. The students will then be given time within lessons, following on from assessment feedback to reflect on their feedback and to act upon it. Independent learning is used weekly to further embed skills or knowledge attained in the lessons and so becomes relevant and helps with progression.

The lessons for all the schemes of learning appear on the Google Classroom for each student to be able to access Psychology work remotely when needed. By providing work online in this format, students also have access to a vast amount of revision resources in preparation for Mock exams and GCSE's.

Students are able to utilise Chromebooks to investigate further into Psychology, reading and critically evaluating pieces of academic text. Students are able to use IT equipment to complete knowledge recall assessments and to access 'how to' videos to develop their understanding of exam structure and technique.

Students have glossaries (online where applicable) for every topic to ensure that the key psychological terminology is fully understood. Students are encouraged to use sophisticated language frequently in lessons.

How is the curriculum assessed?

Assessment is regular and informs us about how the students are progressing. Students are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge to GCSE exam style questions weekly in their lessons. All topics have knowledge tests at the end, followed by a GCSE exam paper. Students also complete an extended piece of writing for every topic to ensure that they are fully prepared for their final GCSE exam. Trackers are completed so that all students can see how they are progressing. Feedforward is built into lessons to reflect on assessments so that students have the opportunity to improve their work. Assessment outcomes then inform future lessons taught. All misconceptions will be addressed and weaknesses become the focus for the following lessons. This allows the teacher to gain clarity and ensure that attainment grades given are rigorous.