

Sociology

The Sociology department aims to empower our students with the skills and ability to critically analyse and explain important matters in our personal lives, our communities, and the world.

How is the curriculum planned?

In Sociology, students will acquire knowledge and understanding of issues within society. Students study various aspects of everyday life, such as the family, education and crime, as well as the social systems and issues that surround everyday interaction. Within each of these areas, students will develop a broad understanding of how individuals are influenced by these topics, but also how individuals and groups also affects these areas. Furthermore, the study of Sociology allows students to understand the skills needed for research and encourages evaluation of research methods, sociological theories and individual sociologists' work.

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 Sociology (amongst other subjects) 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.

Sociology 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 the foundations and key concepts and theories of Sociology, before using these to study the family and education units. In Year 10, students will explore the impact and influences of crime and deviance in society, before moving on to the research methods unit. In Year 11, students will learn about social systems and why social issues exist in society, as well as developing their understanding of research methods in more detail. Regular use of assessment in the form of exam questions will ensure that students have the skills required to apply their knowledge to scenarios. Assessment questions are currently planned for 2 per half term within all year groups. 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.

Sociology has several links to other curriculum areas within the school such as Science, Maths and Psychology. 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 and Psychology, for example, when looking at how to conduct experiments to test human behaviour and theories. Students are expected to utilise Maths skills to read and interpret graphs and charts, identifying trends and being able to explain them. Similarly, they use their knowledge of social issues within History when analysing how society has changed and why.

All students (and especially the disadvantaged) need to acquire the cultural capital to help them be more successful in the future and so key 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, families, societies and also different cultures. Students are encouraged to think

empathically when looking at different family patterns, different laws and different cultures. Students are also given time to research the impact of the class system and education on young people, whilst also suggesting improvements that can be made in these areas. This also encourages students to develop their critical thinking further and self-evaluation.

How is the curriculum delivered/taught?

Pedagogical approaches in Sociology focus on the acquisition of *knowledge*, *application* to real-life scenarios and using *evidence* to make *judgements* about theories and studies. A range of activities are used within lessons to suit all learners. Learning processes in Sociology include reading, explaining and analysing individual theories and sociologists, analysing news articles and critically assessing the media's representation of our key topics (the family, education, crime and deviance)

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 Sociology 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 Sociology, reading and critically evaluating pieces of academic text and media articles about current social issues. 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 sociological 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.