

# Psychology

## Curriculum Information



### How has our curriculum been designed?

Psychology is a valuable addition to the student's academic path to being the best they can be. Through the study of diversity and wellness for all, students are asked to exhibit the values of respect, inclusion and diversity as they examine case studies, experiments and concepts.

Students are developed in a way that produces critical thinkers, encountering different approaches in psychology and understanding the strength and limitations of adopting a singular stance when explaining the complexities of human beings.

Along the way, students' independent learning skills are developed, and students are encouraged to seek wider materials to deepen their knowledge of psychology. Students' own observations of the world are used to bridge the gap between what they see and how to explain it.

The department's aim is to produce students that are open minded, compassionate, analytical and curious about the individuals and groups that make up society while taking a scientific look at behaviour in its numerous forms.

### Implementation

Students are taken on an exploration of the history of psychology. The key studies that have made it the science it is and the ways it has been reviewed and refined over the years. Students are required to analyse these studies with a critical eye through evaluation of weaknesses and strengths, which every concept has.

Students not only study, but engage in and design studies of their own, understanding the key principles and methods that underpin psychological research. The curriculum is broad and robust, building knowledge from topic to topic and developed upon from key stage four to key stage five.

Sharing, debates, discussions and presentations are employed as tools to develop the student's ability to formulate and present an argument. If this skill is developed at a verbal level, the students are more able to formulate a written argument required for highest band attainment. By anchoring understanding in independent work, students make their knowledge concrete in a memorable way. Allowing the information to be recalled more easily, when required.

Students are given access to online resources such as the digital book and guided on how to use trusted sites, such as Tutor2u and Seneca. Independent work and follow up activities to the lesson, stretch and challenge the student, consolidating their knowledge and supporting their growth as a psychology student.

Assessment objectives are: AO1 – Knowledge. Students are expected to know the details of many key studies. AO2 – Application. Students must be able to take a concept and apply it to the behaviour of a scenario. AO3 – Evaluation. Students develop the ability to identify the weaknesses and strengths the explanation presented to them, while being able to spot the same in the

research methods employed by the psychologist. Students are stretched to make synoptic links between the topics and understand how one area of psychology may be linked to another and that a holistic look at the subject may provide more answers to the question of why human beings are the way they are.

Assessments come in the form of recall, questioning and activities each lesson, giving the student and teacher an opportunity to understand whether the concept has been understood. Teaching and homework tasks can then be allocated appropriately. Periodically students are assessed using mid-topic and end of topic assessments giving an overview of where revision is required. Mock exams and end of year exams give students a true sense of the requirements of the external examinations, that occur at the end of the two-year course. Students sitting 2 papers at GCSE and three at A-Level.

## Impact

We take stock of student progress by having 'Do now' tasks at the beginning of each lesson, identifying any gaps in knowledge or misconceptions. Follow up discussions indicate whether students can build on prior knowledge as we progress through the topics. Listening to the questions students pose along with targeted questioning also reveals understanding as well as curiosity.

Students are asked to apply their knowledge to an application question that allows them to take a concept and use its ideas for a case study.

Essay question assessments, mini papers, mid-topic and end of topic assessments are set so that students receive feedback to support improvement on their next assessment as well as their external exams.

External examinations are analysed thoroughly each year for the weaknesses in the cohort and adjustments are made to improve the syllabus accordingly. This analysis is held up against the local and national picture, giving us an idea of how well we are doing in the context of our subject. The majority of students achieve target grade, with a significant number going on to study Psychology or Psychology related subjects.

## Research Links/Professional Links

Psychology AQA GCSE specification [here](#)

Psychology AQA A – Level Specification [here](#)

## Sequencing

The Psychology course is sequenced to best equip the student with the skills they require to successfully complete the course. Putting research methods at the start of the course, students are able to comprehend the principles underpinning scientific research, as well as developing the

skill of evaluation. The weaknesses and strengths, and therefore the usefulness of a study or theory, is essential to higher tier questions and students begin to develop this from the start. Students are guided through eight topics per key stage. Some topics lend themselves as building blocks to others, therefore logically coming before the more complex material (for example Brain and Neuropsychology supports the learning of Psychological Problems). By the end of the course students are familiar with key studies within Psychology that will support them as a foundation to the next step on their academic journey.

Some topics are revisited and deepened at A – Level, such as Research Methods, Memory and Social Influence. Students will both deepen their knowledge of the topic as well as stretch their skills from KS4 to KS5. Psychological Problems are investigated once more, with the focus coming away from depression and addiction and moving onto Schizophrenia. Expanding the student's knowledge of psychopathology and the way in which Psychology aims to resolve these issues.

Throughout KS5, students are asked to assess the weaknesses and strengths of the approach taken in understanding human behaviour, culminating in deep engagement with contemporary issues and debates grappled with in the psychological world. Students are then able to make a sound decision as to whether continued study in the subject is suitable for their future.

Either way, critical thinking, evaluation and application of knowledge are transferable skills developed and available to the individual, benefitting most areas of life.

| <b>Key Stage</b> | <b>Qualifications</b> | <b>Exam Board</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Key Stage 4      | GCSE                  | AQA               |
| Key Stage 5      | A – Level             | AQA               |