



Psychology

Curriculum Intent

Key Stage 5

Many students choose to study Psychology at A Level because they are interested in learning about human behaviour through the scientific study of compelling topics such as mental health, gender, memory, attachment, social psychology and forensic psychology. The course also provides the opportunity for students to consider key issues and debates in psychological research, such as cultural bias and free will vs. determinism.

The intent of this course is to develop students' knowledge, application and evaluation of key psychological theories and studies, as well as developing their mathematical, practical, and analytical skills in research methods. It prepares students to meet the assessment objectives of the A Level course and provides a solid foundation in the knowledge and skills required for related further study and work.

We aim to bring Psychology to life using class discussions, mini-experiments, presentations and creative activities. Exam technique is refined through the routine practice of examination style questions, including essays and student progress is routinely monitored using half-termly mid and end of topic tests, plus annual mock examinations.

Encompassing a broad range of topics and skills, the subject attracts students taking a wide range of other A Level choices; for some students this is their only subject with an extended written essay component, for other students, this is their only A Level in a scientific discipline. The diverse range of skills and perspectives of our students makes for an interesting background to class discussion.

A Level Psychology has the added attraction of counting as a science for many university courses. Around a quarter to a third of our students typically go on to study Psychology, or related subjects, such as Criminology, at university. Many of these students have successfully applied to Russell Group universities and we have supported students with successful Oxbridge applications. Other students have gone on to study courses as diverse as Dentistry, Drama, English, Medicine and Sports Sciences, benefiting from the transferable skills in research and analytical thinking that the A Level course has given them.

Curriculum Implementation

Key Stage 5: A Level (AQA)

The Psychology A Level course comprises three two-hour papers taken at the end of the two-year course.

All assessment is by written exam and there is no coursework requirement. Each exam is worth a third of the total marks and typically includes a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer and extended essay writing questions. 16-mark essay questions are the highest tariff questions.

Paper One and elements of Paper Two (Research Methods and Approaches) are taught in Year 12. Paper Three and the remainder of Paper Two (Biopsychology) are taught in Year 13. Please see the curriculum journey for an overview of which topics are taught at each stage of the course.

Years 12 and 13

Paper One 2-hour paper (96 marks)	Paper Two 2-hour paper (96 marks)	Paper Three 2-hour paper (96 marks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Influence• Memory• Attachment• Psychopathology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches in Psychology• Biopsychology• Research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues and Debates in Psychology• Gender• Schizophrenia• Forensic Psychology

Impact

Key Stage 5

Evidence of impact can be seen in students' ability to understand and recall information, but more importantly to select and apply this knowledge to new contexts and scenarios. Routine mid topic and end of topic assessments provide the opportunity to address misconceptions and facilitate appropriate teacher interventions.

Impact can be measured in terms of progression throughout the course. When learning a new topic, students are able to draw upon prior learning and see the connections between different areas of knowledge. For example, students can effectively recall and apply core content from Year 12 topics such as Research Methods and Approaches when learning new topics in Year 13.

Key measures are the final examination results and student progress in relation to their target grade. Our examination results for A Level Psychology are consistently well above the national average, with the majority of students attaining at or above their target grade.

Impact is also evidenced by how prepared students feel for further study and the world of work. The variety of teaching and learning strategies employed throughout the two-year course gives students confidence and a base of transferable skills in areas such as revision and exam technique, discussion and debate, working as a team, delivering presentations and conducting research. Furthermore, students who go on to study Psychology or related subjects at university will have secured a solid grounding in psychological theory and research methods.

Finally, students express their enjoyment of Psychology, the quality of teaching they receive and their appreciation of the knowledge and skills they gain from studying this A Level. This can be observed in the engagement of students during lessons and is routinely recorded in student voice feedback.