

# Psychology Curriculum Overview

## Curriculum intent

Alongside making progress on the course and students achieving/exceeding their MEPGs, our aim is to develop well rounded individuals who recognise the importance of psychology in society, develop a better understanding of themselves as well as the minds and behaviours of others. This is particularly important for the demographic we teach as students can understand mental health conditions and issues in their own communities better.

The curriculum encourages students to consider different explanations for human behaviour (psychological, biological, cognitive etc.) and be able to evaluate these explanations to draw conclusions about the extent to which an explanation is useful in understanding the world and individuals around them.

We want students to build on skills developed in the sciences, maths and humanities such as knowing how to carry out research, analysing results as well as how to present a balanced argument in an academic essay. These are important skills that they can take forward to future learning and employment.

We hope for students to leave the psychology course being able to analyse the world and individuals around them in new ways, incorporating a myriad of approaches learned and with a more critical mind.

## Curriculum Implementation

There are key themes/skills (e.g., approaches in psychology and research methods) that underpin the content and form the foundation of psychology. Therefore, the curriculum is organised with an introduction to these topic areas at the beginning, so that students have the necessary baseline knowledge to succeed. These themes are then threaded throughout the course and are addressed in different topic areas e.g., the biological approach is considered in the psychopathology topic to explain mental health disorders and research methods is delivered throughout the course via the single period 5 lesson each week.

The order of the topics delivered does not always follow the order in the specification as some topics are better understood when delivered chronologically or restructured so that more complex concepts are covered later on when students are more confident with key skills and specialist terminology.

Teaching methods include low stakes testing, class debate and discussion, teacher input alongside student-led tasks etc. The use of structured workbooks, booklets and research methods booklets for year one and two enable students to stay on top of the vast amount of content they are required to retain.

## Curriculum impact

The skills gained from studying psychology include analytical and evaluative techniques and independent essay writing skills, which will allow progress onto a variety of degree subjects.

Students studying the course have gone onto study related subjects at university. For example, in recent cohorts we have had students accepted to study psychology, criminology, biomedical science at university with some accepted into Russell Group universities such as Cambridge, Kings College London, Queen Mary and more. We have had three ex-students return to the school in the last few years to volunteer and gain experience within the department and two have gone onto train to become psychology teachers. We also currently have a member of the department who was an ex-student thus showing the long-term impact of the course to inspire.

We believe that students leave our course with an open mind and a deeper understanding of the issues faced in today's society. They have a greater awareness of the key explanations of human behaviour, an understanding of ethical issues and can consider different positions within debates. We know this through their ability to articulate different viewpoints in the classroom as well as through their essay writing.