Psychology (AQA)

Course Information

Psychology is the scientific study of the brain, the mind and behaviour. Psychologists develop theories to explain human behaviour and use the scientific method to conduct research, in the same way as the natural sciences. For example, in the topic of Social Influence we consider competing theories for why we obey authority figures, whilst exploring the findings of famous obedience experiments.

Course Content

Lessons are based around discussion of psychological theories
and the evidence that can be used to support or challenge them.
The course is well resourced, with a bespoke study guide and accompanying booklet of exam questions, for every topic. We aim
to replicate many of the key studies in the classroom to enhance understanding of the content in addition to good research design. Students have the opportunity to participate in exceptional trips and experiences to complement their learning including conferences, a prison visit and revision workshops.

What causes mental illness? Why do some people become
criminals and how can we stop reoffending? Are there irreversible consequences of separating an infant from its caregiver? Are eyewitnesses accurate and should we use their testimony in court? What do the different parts of the brain do and can it recover from damage? Why are some people more obedient than others? How does medication work for mental health issues and what are the alternative treatments? At what age are children able to solve more complex problems and why? Is our behaviour due to our genes or our upbringing?

We explore all of these questions and more, throughout the two year course!

The examination board is AQA.

Year 12
Research Methods, Social Influence, Approaches, Memory, Psychopathology, Attachment, Biopsychology

What Next

Year 13
Schizophrenia, Forensic Psychology, Cognition and Development, Issues and Debates

Skills

Skills and Assessment Objectives:

AO1 = Knowledge and understanding of psychological theory and research
AO2 = Application of psychological knowledge to a novel scenario
AO3 = Analysis and evaluation of psychological theory and research

25% of your final grade will be based on Research Methods. You will learn about good research design and the different methodologies for gathering data; this knowledge is a good basis for further study of any research-based subject. You will learn to critique studies based on whether the researchers have gathered data that is valid, generalised their findings appropriately, or dealt with ethical issues. You will quickly learn not to accept the conclusions of research at face value and will develop some excellent evaluation skills. These evaluation skills are transferable, and will allow you to take any piece of published research and consider the strengths and limitations; a vital transferable skill for further study of the Sciences.
You will develop your extended writing skills and take your mathematical skills beyond the level of GCSE, as you learn about how statistical tests can be used to analyse data.

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Assessment

Assessment:

There are three, two-hour exams at the end of Year 13. There is no coursework.
The papers comprise a mixture of short answer, multiple choice answers and extended writing (up to 16 marks). Throughout the course you will sit regular assessments in class, under timed conditions. These don't count towards your final grade but will prepare you for your final exams. You will receive detailed feedback to improve and provided with expert resources to develop your exam technique based on past questions, mark schemes and examiner reports.

Entry Requirements:

Overall, at least 10% of the marks Psychology will require the use of mathematical skills. These skills will be at least the standard of a Grade 6 in higher tier GCSE Mathematics. As the Psychology course contains a lot of biological content, GCSE Biology is desirable. The course will involve extended writing (up to 16 marks), so a Grade 6 in GCSE English is also desirable.

What Next

What next?

A degree in Psychology may lead you to a career as an educational psychologist, clinical psychologist, forensic psychologist, neuropsychologist or one of many more careers. The British Psychological Society has a useful careers page: https://careers.bps.org.uk/

Further Reading:
The British Psychological Society:
https://www.bps.org.uk/public/become-psychologist/getting-started

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