Hayesfield GIRLS' SCHOOL | MIXED SIXTH

Psychology A-Level

Curriculum Booklet
2024-2025

Head of Subject: Molly Matthews

Subject Curriculum Intent:

'The more you know yourself, the more patience you have for what you see in others.'
Erik Erikson

Psychology is invaluable in expanding our understanding of both ourselves and others. Our Psychology course challenges students to develop their understanding of human behaviour and encourages the British Values of democracy and tolerance so students can celebrate the diversity of their fellow students and the wider society.

Psychology is a subject offered to all students as part of the A Level options in Year 12. It is ideally suited to Hayesfield's comprehensive intake and students of different abilities can make good progress.

Psychology allows students to transcend Bath's traditional demographics. As a school that is predominantly white British, Psychology ensures that our students have a knowledge of cross-cultural variation in human behaviour. It is a safe place to engage and challenge prejudice and stereotypes.

As a proud girls' school and mixed sixth form, our Psychology course contains topics that allow students to call out and question gender bias in psychological research and theories. It is a subject that is relevant to everyday life and allows students to incorporate their own experiences in discussion of psychological theory.

Our curriculum intents for Psychology:

- To encourage students to question and investigate human behaviour and to consider what might be the possible causes of why people behave in the way they do.
- To develop students' natural curiosity and allow them to question the world in which they live.
- To make students informed about the cornerstones of psychology; the psychological approaches to explaining human behaviour, so that they are prepared to apply their knowledge to specific mental illnesses, human phenomena and cultural variation.
- To produce open minded, independent thinkers prepared to take on the challenges of a constantly changing modern world.
- To encourage a deep understanding of the research process and to get students to approach academic questions with the rigor and integrity that both Higher Education providers and employers' value.
- To use the principles of science to design and analyse research; incorporating the use of data and statistics to inform our understanding of human behaviour.
- To provide a safe space open for all to explore the intricacies of human experience.
- To facilitate a love of the Social Sciences which moves towards further study or careers working with people.

The psychology A Level course enables students to gain a flavour for this topic at degree level. The course places a special emphasis on scientific processes and how psychologists conduct research. This component prepares students for studying social sciences at university. Many students choose to study psychology and other social sciences at degree level after studying the psychology A Level.

Subject Curriculum Implementation:

The psychology course is designed in a way to allow students to build on prior knowledge and develop their cultural capital as they progress through the course by beginning with a foundation of research methods and psychological approaches, which then feeds into other topics and skills which are taught in the first year and embedded further in the second year. The demands of the course become increasingly more complex, requiring more synoptic links and higher level thinking.

Psychology is designed to meet the specific needs of learners at Hayesfield School. All students have the opportunity to succeed. We support low prior attainers by scaffolding activities that unlock the course content whilst ensuring that the highest attainers are challenged by discussing abstract theoretical concepts alongside psychological theories and research.

In year 12, students are taught introductory topics in psychology (social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology) as well as half of psychology in context (approaches, biopsychology and research methods). These topics introduce students to novel concepts and ideas and encourage reflection on their own life experiences.

Students start the course being introduced to the psychological approaches; the cornerstones of psychology that are embedded in many other topic areas within the course (psychodynamic, behaviourist, humanistic, cognitive and biological), which give students a good foundation in which to explain human behaviour. Similarly, starting with research methods equips students with the language and terminology needed to evaluate psychological research.

Year 13 opens a new challenge in far more unfamiliar topic areas which students study in greater depth to the topics studied in year 13. Students will use the skills and knowledge they have developed in Year 12 to study the issues and options: gender, schizophrenia and forensic psychology, as well as issues and debates. In these topics, students will consider a range of explanations of the phenomena and evaluate each explanations relative strengths and limitations. Issues and debates require students to take a more holistic perspective and to reflect on previous topics learned. This is why this is one of the last topics taught in year 13.

The final assessment of the course is via external examinations held in the early summer of Year 13 but much assessment during the year will be completed by low stakes assessments such as knowledge tests. When exam technique is discussed a focus is on discussion, assessment and evaluation rather than teaching to the exam.

Psychology encourages debate and discussion of social issues to enable students to challenge common sense thinking and stereotypes. Whilst providing the transferable skills needed to empower students in many lessons, Key Stage 5 psychology provides an ideal grounding in the social sciences leading to further study of social science subjects, as well as maths, biological and humanities courses at university.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Year 12	Year 13
Fortnightly lesson allocation	8	8

Year 12

Exam Board: AQA

Specification: A Level - 7182

Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	
1	**Research methods block 1 (experimental method)** ● Types of experiments ● Variables, hypotheses and controls **Approaches** ● Psychodynamic, behaviourist, humanistic, cognitive and biological approaches ● Explanation and evaluation of each approach	**Assessment details** ● Experimental methods ● Exam questions ● 30 minutes
2	**Social influence** ● Conformity and obedience ● Resistance to social influence and social change **Memory** ● Theories of memory ● Forgetting and eyewitness testimony	**Assessment details** ● Approaches ● Exam questions ● 30 minutes
3	**Research methods block 2 (data analysis and maths content)** ● Measures of central tendency ● Measures of dispersion **Psychopathology** ● Definitions of abnormality ● Cognitive explanation of depression	**Assessment details** ● Social influence ● Exam questions ● 30 minutes
4	**Attachment** ● How attachments form ● How attachments are measured **Psychopathology** ● Behaviourist explanation of phobias ● Biological explanation of OCD	**Assessment details** ● Attachment ● Exam questions ● 30 minutes
5	**Research methods block 3 (non-experimental methods)** ● Observation ● Correlation **Biopsychology** ● The nervous system ● Synaptic transmission **Mock exam**	

	• Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology • May • 2 hours	
6	**Research methods block 3 (non-experimental methods)** • Self-report • Case studies **Biopsychology** • The brain: hemispheric lateralisation, localisation and plasticity • Biological rhythms	**Assessment details** • Biopsychology • Exam questions • 30 minutes

Year 13

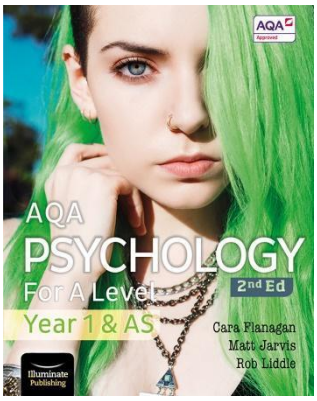
Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	
1	**Research methods block 4 (qualitative analysis and statistics)** • Content and thematic analysis • Inferential statistics **Gender** • Sex-role stereotypes and androgyny • Biological explanations of sex and gender	**Assessment details** • Research methods • 1 hour
2	**Issues and debates** • Determinism vs free will • Nature vs nurture **Gender** • Cognitive explanations of gender • Psychodynamic explanations of gender	**Assessment details** • Gender • 30 minutes
3	**Forensic psychology** • Offender profiling • Biological explanations of offending **Schizophrenia** • Reliability and validity of diagnosis • Biological explanation and treatment of schizophrenia	**Assessment details** • Mock exam paper 2 (psychology in context) • 2 hours
4	**Forensic psychology** • Psychological explanations of offending • Prison and non-custodial sentences **Schizophrenia** • Psychological explanations and treatment of schizophrenia • The interactionist approach to explaining and treating schizophrenia	**Assessment details** • Mock exam paper 3 (issues and options • 2 hours • Issues and debates • 30 minutes

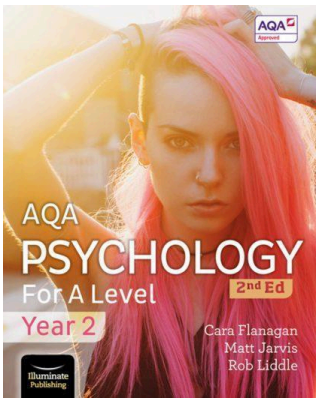
5	**Revision and Exams**	

Revision and Support:

Psychology is focused on understanding behaviour and different theories explaining behaviour. The best way to support your son/daughter is to provide him/her with an environment of discussion and debates. You can do this by the following:

- Ensure he/she has access to a quality broadsheet newspaper
- Discuss different examples of behaviour and consider different explanations
- Allow him/her to teach you psychological theory. Discuss whether you agree with it!
- Test knowledge of different research methods key terms
- The best textbook for year 12 is AQA psychology for A Level year 1 & AS - student book ISBN: 9781908682406
- The best textbook for year 13 is AQA psychology for A Level year 2 - student book ISBN: 9781912820467





Final Assessment Structure:

Component	Weighting	Content	Proposed Date of Examination
Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology	33.3%	• Section A: Social influence • Section B: Memory • Section C: Attachment • Section D: Psychopathology Each section worth 24 marks 96 marks total Research methods embedded into one section 2 hours	May Y13
Paper 2: Psychology in context	33.3%	• Section A: Approaches • Section B: Biopsychology • Section C: Research methods Section A and B 24 marks Section C 48 marks 96 marks total 2 hours	May Y13
Paper 3: Issues and Options	33.3%	• Section A: Issues and debates • Section B: Gender • Section C: Schizophrenia • Section D: Forensic psychology Each section worth 24 marks 96 marks total Research methods embedded into one section 2 hours	June Y13

Please see exam board websites for up to date information:

https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182