

Psychology Department

Psychology is offered in the Sixth Form only. There are no specific entry requirements but it is helpful to have good English, mathematics and science skills.

Psychology is “the study of mind and behaviour”. It looks into the reasons behind our behaviours, thoughts and emotions as an individual and also as part of a group. Examples of areas psychologists may be involved in include the processes of learning, coping with stress and working in a team; these are things we may frequently encounter on a daily basis. However a psychologist also may investigate cases where a person displays atypical behaviours, thoughts or emotions such as depression. For more information about psychology in general please visit the British Psychological Society online at www.bps.org.uk.

Aims/objectives of the Department

To guide girls in acquiring knowledge of psychological approaches, theories and studies and to be able to apply this to their own experiences.



Staffing/grouping of girls

Classes in the Sixth Form are typically smaller than in the Senior School, and girls benefit from participating in small group work and discussions.

Assessment/delivery of lessons

With each topic (detailed below) the class discusses the relevant theories that have been put forward and the studies that have been carried out to support these theories. Lessons are delivered in the classroom, however several units of the course include practical elements such as observations and experiments, for example an experiment to see if noise affects how well a memory task is completed.

Throughout term time pupils' progress is informally assessed by short written tasks, and as exams approach through practice questions. There are also a number of other activities such as presentation and poster work, which contribute to girls' attainment grades.

Summary of study and details of examinations

The Department follows the AQA (A) Specification. Each unit is examined by an exam of one and a half hours, except the final exam which is two hours long. The AS Level exams are comprised of short-answer questions and some questions requiring essay answers. At A2 Level longer essay answers are required.

http://web.aqa.org.uk/qual/gce/science/psychology_a_overview.php?id=03&prev=03

AS Level

Unit 1

- Cognitive Psychology including memory and eyewitness testimony.
- Developmental Psychology investigating attachments between infants and their caregivers.
- Research Methods is introduced to teach pupils how to critically evaluate research and the methods used within the research. We also look at analysing and presenting results. Several small experiments and observations are undertaken to give practical experience.



Unit 2

- Biological Psychology with a focus on stress.
- Social Psychology looking at social influence, conformity and authority.
- Individual Differences including how we can define “abnormal” behaviours.

A2 level

Unit 3 Selected topics

Likely choices from a wide range of options include Relationships, Aggression and Eating Behaviour.

Unit 4

- Psychopathology investigating schizophrenia.
- Psychology in Action looking at media influences on behaviour.
- Research Methods consolidating what has been learned throughout the course.

Extra-curricular visits and trips

Psychology pupils are invited to go to Twycross Zoo to look at animal behaviour and to investigate similarities and differences between different species. Additionally we have opportunities to attend master classes at universities and take part in conferences. For example, in 2010 girls took part in an introduction to neuroscience where we looked at new research into brain functioning including the effects of drugs and the diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Careers using Psychology

Many people with psychology degrees take up careers in business, teaching and health care. Other popular areas are Forensic Psychology (working with police, the courts and prisons), Clinical Psychology (involving disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, anorexia), Educational Psychology (dealing with strategies for learning and for managing children’s behaviour) and Occupational Psychology (including recruitment and personnel work).