

Psychology

Intent

At St Bede's Psychology is delivered at GCSE and A Level. There are currently minimum entry requirements in place at KS5 but it has been offered to all year 9 students as an option to reflect the equitable curriculum at St Bede's. Following a review of the appropriateness of the GCSE course for some learners, it is likely it will become an option for higher attaining students on a grade 6 or more in Science and English (effective from September 2019). This is to reflect the fact that whilst some skills can be developed in Key Stage 3 within other subject areas, the majority of material is new at the start of year 10.

Broadly speaking the intent in psychology GCSE and A Level contribute to a rich curriculum at St Bede's which is in keeping with the College's Science Specialism status. The majority of schools do not offer Psychology at GCSE and this makes the options at St Bede's unique.

Throughout both Key Stage 4 and 5, students will find out about themselves and others through enquiry into research, theory and evidence. They will also gain a deeper knowledge and understanding into the following areas (all of which overlap with the other sciences):

- Analyses & evaluation: Drawing conclusions; analysing patterns; limitations/strengths of theories
- Enquiry skills: Devise questions; test hypotheses; plan variables; analyse results
- Problem solving: Discuss ethics; estimate risks; review theories.
- Application: Applying knowledge and understanding to real world examples.

Implementation

The curriculum at Key stage 5 currently consists of AQA psychology A Level which is delivered over 2 years for the majority of students. For some students on bespoke learning programmes an AS level is available or a 3 year course in psychology. At KS4 Psychology is delivered over a 2-year period using the OCR GCSE specification. Students develop a strong understanding of psychology at KS4 and the vast majority then chose to build on this by taking the subject at A level.

For both KS4 and KS5 there is heavy focus on lesson planning and the development of high quality resources for use throughout the department. The resources are a result of collaborative work and are

continually being updated to best meet the needs of learners on both courses. Split screen teaching is used regularly, particularly at GCSE, so that students can identify which assessment objectives and key skills they are developing each lesson. Additional wider reading is regularly placed online for all year groups to stretch and challenge high ability groups.

Engagement is a key aspect in the delivery of psychology at both GCSE and A level. There are numerous opportunities to plan research as well as sessions with a very practical focus such as learning about phobias with live animals or dissecting sheep brains.

The knowledge based curriculum is also planned and delivered with SMSC in mind and there are many links in topic areas such as Kohlberg's moral reasoning and Piaget's developmental stages. The idea of socially sensitive research and ethical issues is covered extensively at both GCSE and A level.

Both formative and summative assessment is routinely used across the department. Both KS4 & 5 classes participate in the college's regular classroom exams as well as end of year mock assessments (as per the college calendar). At KS4 students engage in numerous different forms of assessment and are also given plenty of time to reflect on progress. Cover sheets used on the top of classroom assessments helps to guide them in the process of reflection and target setting. At KS5, assessment top sheets are used for all extended answers as well as reflective learning journals that students complete at the end of topics and at various significant points in the academic year. A stronger focus on self-assessment is planned for the remainder of the year to increase quality feedback and student responsibility for their own learning.

Impact

Progress is routinely analysed at several points during the year following results from internal exams or predicted grades. The impact of individual teachers or changes in curriculum or teaching and learning can then be evaluated. A high level of collaboration is involved to ensure moderation of work and accuracy of predictions. Individualised intervention programmes are used to support students not making expected progress.

A full results analysis is carried out after all external exams and used to inform the departmental improvement plan.

Psychology compliments the rest of the curriculum well and there is a large overlap with subjects such as biology and maths as well as RF and English. Many of the GCSE students choose to study the subject at A level and a high proportion of A level students apply to psychology related

degree programmes for post 18 study. Psychology is a science subject so is also commonly used as the third A Level (in addition to two facilitating subjects) for those wanting to study competitive courses such as medicine. Results at A level are strong and have helped many students secure places on their desired degree programme or apprenticeship.

Attributes of psychology students at the end of GCSE and/or A level:

- An open and questioning approach to ideas, demonstrating curiosity, independence of thought and the ability to appreciate a range of perspectives on the natural and social worlds.
- An appreciation of the development and values of Psychology, awareness of its context and links with other disciplines, and awareness of the provisional and dynamic nature of knowledge
- The ability creatively to solve problems using a range of different approaches and techniques, and to determine which techniques are appropriate for the issue at hand.
- An appreciation of the social, environmental and global implications of psychology, including recognition of any ethical implications.
- The knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness actively to pursue future goals.