

Psychology at Painsley

Intent/rationale

At Painsley Catholic College we seek to ensure each and every one of our students achieves the highest personal outcomes in order to fulfil their God-given potential. At Painsley the AQA specification of psychology is followed. The A Level qualification offers an engaging and effective introduction to psychology. The specification was selected as it is one of the market-leading qualifications. AQA has worked with teachers, HE and the British Psychological Society to produce a clear, up-to-date and stimulating specification. The specification reflects advances and changes in the subject and it provides a coherent and holistic programme of study. This particular specification is the biggest teaching community and as such Painsley is able to access the widest network of support and it's for these reasons and those mentioned above as to why it was selected over other examination boards.

Objectives of this curriculum

- To develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of psychology which include perspectives, topic areas, research methods and how they relate to each other
- To develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- To develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- To develop students' interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- To understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society

Implementation

- The curriculum has been shaped this way with students following the AS Level of psychology in the first instance. The rationale behind this is that if any student just wishes to study the AS psychology course they can. AQA psychology is very scientific in its nature and as such provides an excellent foundation for those wishing to study the course at HE.
- The objectives of the course are made clear via schemes of learning, the prospectus and throughout the lessons in the classroom with the use of success criteria.
- The A2 content of the course has self-assessment activities and wider web links including extension activities.
- The psychology curriculum reflects national policies such as PSHE by considering key principles regarding human rights. The BPS guidelines in research are frequently drawn upon when considering how psychological research has been conducted and the wider implications of the research. We enhance the course by including opportunities to link with industry and higher education to promote career aspirations. Furthermore, aspects of social, moral, spiritual and cultural values are embedded into schemes of learning. Links to Gospel values are highlighted throughout the year. Other national policies like the promotion of British Values are also made clear in the schemes of work.
- All lessons have appropriate success criteria with all further details (e.g. careers links) included in the schemes of learning. All of these documents are assigned to a shared area as well as partner schools in the MAC should they require access to them. The documents are regularly reviewed and improved.
- We operate specific support for Pupil Premium students. We continually check data and filter for the performance of disadvantaged students to provide for effective intervention. We ensure that disadvantaged students are included on educational visits and that their costs are met through the

school. We also use Pupil Premium funding to purchase these students' revision materials and ensure that they have access to textbooks online at school.

- There is no requirement for students to have studied psychology prior to A Level but it is stipulated that students should have at least a grade 7 in Maths and English. This decision has been made mainly via recommendations of the examination board as to whether a particular student would be able to cope with the demands of the course.
- Teachers use evidence of students' learning to feed into their planning and adaptation of the curriculum. They do this collectively via the scheme of learning and individually by using formative assessment.
- Students of all abilities and in all categories of learners achieve well, reflected in the proven track record of examination success. Students' work across the curriculum is outstanding.
- Outcomes focus and guide all development plans and drive improvement.
- Students are ready for the next stage in their journey with an education and qualification that match their destinations.
- Students are confident, resilient and actively engaged in the wider society.
- All students studying psychology will receive 10 hours of curriculum time per fortnight.
- All students will have access to an enriched curriculum. For example, opportunities exist for students of all ages to experience learning beyond the classroom. This will allow them to enrich their knowledge by, for example, visiting places they may not normally consider such as the national history museum for evolutionary theories of man and perception in psychology. From KS5, we prepare our students well for university through the completion of the practical endorsement aspect of the 'A' Level specifications. Furthermore, talks from university admissions tutors are given to Y12 and Y13 students.
- Students will have a mixed ability profile along with fulfilling the basic requirements of meeting the needs of the course which is at least a grade 7 in maths and English.
- A university-style learning experience will operate in the psychology tutorials and activities here will include the ability to engage in effective note taking, writing psychological abstracts and engaging in wider reading around the subject area. Assessed and independent work are supplemented with enrichment.
- An information, advice and guidance programme will respond wholeheartedly to the Gatsby guidelines. For example, a careers board is evident in the classroom and links made in the schemes of work to various careers. These help to aspire students to many different jobs, not just higher education.
- Success criteria in every lesson are set in order to guide student performance. This ensures work is demanding and matches the aims of the curriculum. Success criteria are graded, actionable and provided for all lessons and homework. Students should use these as a checklist for their progress and should refer back to them within the lesson, e.g. in learning episodes.
- Schemes of learning are adapted and developed to reflect moderation. This is an attempt to minimise the total areas of weakness and misconception. Spiral learning starters are used to either link new material to older material or as an opportunity to reduce misconceptions. Learn-to-learn strategies are used and shared to help students with their metacognition.
Psychology is a mixed A Level ability subject. However, peer tutoring provides opportunities for differentiation within the class.
- Fortnightly assessed work with follow-up tasks further develops students' knowledge and understanding.
- High quality teaching responds to the needs of students. Teachers act on the findings and incorporate them into lessons from assessments to secure the best possible outcomes.
- Spiral learning is a key focus of all formative and summative assessment, with teachers actively marking work in lessons in order to identify misconceptions early. For example, in psychology short mark questions are frequently attempted to check for understanding and corrected there and then (live marking).

- Our assessments continue to employ a variety of familiar types of questions such as multiple choice, short answer and extended writing/essays, which target the skills of knowledge and understanding, application and evaluation.
- Students' understanding of research methods is gained through classroom experience of practical psychology. They are assessed using the familiar scenario-based question style and research methods questions embedded in topics.
- High quality resources complement the delivery of specialist learning, primarily in psychology students are issued with an A Level text and access to an online text for both AS and A Level material.

Impact

- Results in psychology have been consistently good improving year on year and well above the national average. Psychology at Painsley has always been a popular subject with a high intake of students each year wishing to study the subject. Student voice indicates that students enjoy the subject many go on to study psychology at university or venture into a career using their A Level psychology knowledge. Psychology offers many transferable skills that students often say has enabled them in virtually most careers.
- Key subject knowledge and skills are consolidated half-termly before moving onto the new topics. This is done through shared resources, homework, revision lists, and revision tasks and standardised summative assessment. Following assessment, strengths and weaknesses are identified. These are addressed using follow-up tasks.
- Teachers know students remember what they've been taught through the use of formatively assessed homework, learning episodes and spiral learning starters. Furthermore, spiral learning questions are always incorporated into assessment.
- In psychology students' books and work conform to a specified format. This shows clearly the success criteria of homework with follow-up tasks actioned by the students written in purple pen. Assessed work is found in a homework book with more independent work and research /handouts being kept in a file which is more appropriate for the transition into university study.
- Teachers use evidence of students' learning to feed into their planning and adaptation of the curriculum. They do this collectively via the scheme of learning and individually by using formative assessment.
- Teachers keep abreast of recent development and research in the psychological field by attending ATP (Association for the Teaching of Psychology conference) and AQA examination workshop updates.