Curriculum overview: Psychology GCSE (2026-2028)

Key content requirements at GCSE	
Cognition and Behaviour Students will be expected to: ▪ demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes, procedures and theories in relation to the specified Paper 1 content ▪ apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 1 content in a range of contexts ▪ analyse and evaluate psychological ideas, information, processes and procedures in relation to the specified Paper 1 content and make judgements, draw conclusions and produce developments or refinements of psychological procedures based on their reasoning and synthesis of skills ▪ evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and ▪ effectiveness ▪ show how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behaviour ▪ demonstrate the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity ▪ develop an understanding of the interrelationships between the core areas of psychology ▪ show how the studies for topics relate to the associated theory. ▪ Knowledge and understanding of research methods will be assessed across all topic areas in Paper 1. These skills should be developed by studying the specification content and through ethical, practical research activities, involving: • designing research • conducting research • analysing and interpreting data. ▪ By carrying out practical research activities, students will manage associated risks and use information and communication technology (ICT)	**Social Context and Behaviour** Students will be expected to: ▪ demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes, procedures and theories in relation to the specified Paper 2 content ▪ apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 2 content in a range of contexts ▪ analyse and evaluate psychological ideas, information, processes and procedures in relation to the specified Paper 2 content and make judgements, draw conclusions and produce developments or refinements of psychological procedures based on their reasoning and synthesis of skills ▪ evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and ▪ effectiveness ▪ show how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behaviour ▪ demonstrate the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity ▪ develop an understanding of the interrelationships between the core areas of psychology ▪ show how the studies for topics relate to the associated theory. ▪ Knowledge and understanding of research methods will be assessed across all topic areas in Paper 2. These skills should be developed ▪ by studying the specification content and through ethical, practical research activities, involving: • designing research • conducting research • analysing and interpreting data.

Key skills requirements at GCSE

Students should be able to demonstrate their ability to:

- Recall and describe key knowledge, concepts and subject-specific terminology
- Explain ideas, processes and relationships clearly and accurately
- Apply knowledge and understanding to both familiar and unfamiliar contexts
- Analyse information, data, sources or texts to identify patterns, relationships and key features
- Interpret evidence, including graphical, numerical and written forms
- Evaluate arguments, evidence and viewpoints, making reasoned judgements
- Justify conclusions using relevant and accurate evidence
- Solve problems using appropriate methods, strategies and logical reasoning
- Select and use appropriate techniques, tools or approaches for different tasks
- Communicate ideas clearly, coherently and effectively in written form
- Use accurate spelling, punctuation, grammar and subject-specific vocabulary
- Construct well-organised extended responses and arguments
- Compare ideas, perspectives or interpretations, identifying similarities and differences
- Draw conclusions based on evidence and reasoning
- Use mathematical skills, where appropriate, to analyse and present information
- Reflect on and improve their work through revision and refinement

Curriculum Intent

Our GCSE covers a coherent, knowledge-rich body of content that is carefully sequenced to develop students' understanding over time, enabling them to recall, apply, analyse and evaluate knowledge with increasing sophistication. It is designed to ensure students gain strong disciplinary foundations, alongside the ability to think critically, solve problems and communicate effectively. Through planned opportunities to apply learning in a range of contexts, interpret evidence and construct reasoned arguments, students are prepared not only for success at GCSE but for further study, employment and active participation in society.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Portable knowledge
Year 10	**<u>Cognition and Behaviour</u>** **Memory** • Processes of memory: encoding (input) storage and retrieval (output) • Structures of memory • Memory as an active process **Research Methods** • Formulation of testable hypotheses • Types of variable • Sampling methods • Designing research • Correlation • Research procedures • Planning and conducting research	**<u>Cognition and Behaviour</u>** **Perception** • Sensation and perception • Visual cues and constancies • Gibsons direct theory of perception- the influence of nature • Visual illusions • Gregory's constructivist theory of perception- the influences of nurture • Factors affecting perception **<u>Social Context and Behaviour</u>** **Social Influence** • Conformity • Obedience • Prosocial behaviour • Crowd and collective behaviour	**<u>Cognition and Behaviour</u>** **Development** • Early brain development • Piaget's stage theory and the development of intelligence • The role of Piaget's theory in education • The effects of learning on development **Brain and neuropsychology** • Structure and function of the nervous system • Neuron structure and function • Structure and function of the brain • An introduction to neuropsychology	**Reliability** **Validity** **Independent Variable** **Dependent variable** **Nature v Nurture** **Sampling** **Generalisation** **Hypothesis** **Objectivity** **Quantitative** **Qualitative** **Evaluation**

	• Ethical considerations Data Handling • Qualitative and quantitative data • Primary and secondary data • Computation • Descriptive statistics • Interpretation and display of quantitative data • Normal distributions			

Year 11	**<u>Social Context and Behaviour</u>** **Psychological Problems** • An introduction to mental health • How the incidence of significant mental health problems changes over time • Effects of significant mental health problems on individuals and society • Characteristics of clinical depression • Theories of depression • Interventions or therapies for depression • Characteristics of addiction • Theories of addiction • Interventions or therapies for addiction **Language, thought and communication** • The possible relationship between language and thought • The effect of language and thought on our view of the world • Differences between human and animal communication • Non-verbal communication • Explanations of non-verbal behaviour	**<u>Exam Preparation + Revision</u>**	**<u>Revision</u>**	

GCSE external assessment:
Psychology uses the GCSE 1-9 grading system, where 9 is the best grade. Psychology is assessed by examination only. All examinations are terminal (at the end of Year 11). The assessments are comprised of the following components:

There are two written papers, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. Both papers are worth 50% of the final grade.

- Paper 1: Cognition and Behaviour
- Paper 2: Social Context and Behaviour

SMSC in Psychology
Psychology enables pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues in depth. We aim to help pupils to grow and develop as people by preparing them for the adult world and allowing pupils to make sense of the world and how and why others behave the way they do. In keeping with the ethos of the school, SMSC is embedded across the key stages to allow students to engage with meaning and promote personal development.

Spiritual development in Psychology
Psychology supports students' spiritual development by encouraging them to reflect on their own identity, beliefs, and values. Through studying topics such as memory, development, and mental health, students consider what shapes human behaviour and how individuals make sense of their experiences. They learn to appreciate different perspectives and to think deeply about the factors that influence who we are. Psychology promotes curiosity, self-reflection, and an understanding of the complexity of human life.

Moral development in Psychology
Psychology contributes to students' moral development by helping them understand how individuals make decisions about right and wrong. Through studying theories of moral reasoning, social influence, and mental health, students reflect on the consequences of behaviour and the importance of empathy, fairness, and responsibility. They also learn about ethical guidelines in psychological research, which encourages them to consider the moral implications of studying human behaviour.

Social development in Psychology
Psychology contributes to students' social development by helping them understand how people interact, communicate, and behave in groups. Through topics such as social influence, development, and mental health, students learn about the importance of relationships, empathy, and social responsibility. Classroom discussions, group research tasks, and the study of diverse perspectives all support students in developing confidence, cooperation, and respect for others.

Cultural development in Psychology
Psychology supports students' cultural development by helping them understand how behaviour, beliefs, and mental health are influenced by cultural background. Through studying cross-cultural research, cultural variations in attachment, and differences in social norms, students learn to appreciate diversity and challenge stereotypes. Psychology encourages students to recognise that human behaviour is shaped by cultural experiences, promoting respect, open-mindedness, and cultural awareness.