

**MARATHON SCIENCE SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
OUR VISION**

This vision is intended to inform our endeavours as a department and as psychology teachers.

The Psychologists at Marathon Science School aim to:

- Be the best psychology Department in the UK
- Build an extraordinary learning community that goes beyond the curriculum.
- Foster a spirit of enquiry and continual improvement.
- Draw on the rich variety of experience and views to support a coherent and collegiate approach to teaching and learning
- Nurture links with other schools and departments locally, nationally and globally

For pupils we seek to engender:

- Knowledge and understanding of psychological issues and debates that are discussed in the modern world.
- Lasting awareness of the world around us.
- Sensitivity and empathy towards all others.
- Tolerance and independent thinking.
- Preparedness for an active citizen's role in a changing world.

In our department every person's opinion counts and is valued, the pupil voice is encouraged and listened to.

**Psychology** is about issues. It is not about knowing how one feels or how to treat someone when they are sad but more to do with how the psychological issues and debates help to shape the world we live in today. Psychology in marathon school looks at topics such as social influence, criminal psychology, memory and development. It is about empowering tomorrow's adults to develop real global understanding and global citizenship so they have the intellectual understanding to participate individually and collectively in shaping the world around them. This knowledge and understanding of topics, cultures and societies underpin sensitivity and tolerance and contributes to good citizenship. Good psychologists develop a range of skills which make them highly employable and which are relevant to any future workforce. Such information is best interpreted by psychologists who are used to problem solving and decision making and who have built up and developed their expertise through psychological enquiry.

### **THE POWER OF PSYCHOLOGY**

GCSE specifications in psychology must inspire and engage students by providing a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study which develops an understanding of the ideas and values that characterise 'self' and others. Students will be equipped with a psychological literacy that enables them to apply their knowledge and skills in their everyday lives, including making informed decisions about further study and career choices.

*SOURCE: National Curriculum documents.*

The Psychology Department endeavours to:

GCSE specifications in psychology must reflect the learning outcomes, and must require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of key features of the following core areas of psychology through the study of the compulsory and optional topics, and research methods:

- biological – an understanding of biological concepts within psychology, including neuroscience and genetics as contributors to behaviour
- cognitive – an understanding of thought, information and mental processing as contributors to behaviour
- social – an understanding of the social area of psychology, the impact of social and environmental factors on behaviour and the influence of groups
- developmental – an understanding of how individuals change throughout their lives, with a particular focus on childhood and how both nature and nurture can affect individuals

- individual differences – an understanding of the complex nature of human behaviour and experiences and why and how people are different

## **Aims of school Psychology**

The department aims to provide a stimulating and rewarding psychological experience for all and help all students to become thoughtful psychologists and independent thinkers. The basic aims and objectives of school psychology are:

### **1) To help students develop psychological knowledge and conceptual understanding.**

In studying psychology students develop a body of factual knowledge that will support conceptual understanding and stimulate an interest in the study of society. To achieve this psychological teaching at school is based on themes that investigate key topics that teach the students how developments and social constructs are constructed.

### **2) To introduce students to psychological enquiry and develop problem-solving and investigative skills**

In order to achieve this aim psychology lessons involve strategies for teaching students to ask questions and pursue a 'route to enquiry'. A range of intellectual and practical skills is taught such as: observation, measurement, information selection, interpretation, synthesis, decision making, and problem solving.

Psychological skills are taught including graph selection and presentation, sketching and diagrammatic representation.

experiments are used to teach some of these skills and show students exactly what is being taught.

### **3) To help students develop a sense of identity through learning about the United Kingdom and other countries and the relationships between them; to help students develop their own informed opinions and attitudes.**

The psychology scheme of work involves the study of a variety of places local and distant, at a variety of scales and at varying stages of development. Thus students develop a sense of their own identity, of their place in the world and

Updated 24/09/2022

empathy for other life styles, cultures and attitudes. Teaching strategies are in place in psychology to help students develop an understanding of global responsibility and interdependence. These strategies also encourage students to develop their own opinions and attitudes.

## **THE PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULUM**

### **GCSE Year 10 & 11**

Year 10 is the beginning of the study of psychology in the school students take on this subject in year 10 as it is a 2 year programme that can be taught by doing two hour lessons per week. Students first start off by looking into criminal psychology and this is done in order to ensure that students start off by enjoying a topic that is not normally discussed by other subjects in the school.

These topics later on move on to becoming more difficult and all topics are taught with research methods as part in order to ensure that the topics are taught in great depth.

Within the GCSE curriculum there are a number of topics that need to be studied in order to complete the syllabus. These topics are:

- Criminal Psychology
- Development
- Psychological Problems
- Social influence
- Memory
- Sleeping and Dreaming
- Research methods

In year 10 students tend to start to grow a greater interest in the subject and hence this is supported by doing activities such as end of topic trips and other fun and interesting activities to keep morale high and student satisfaction in good spirits. Year 10 study topics such as:

- Criminal Psychology
- Development
- Psychological Problems
- Social influence

## **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

The department fully supports the school assessment policy and views assessment as an integral part of the curriculum at all levels. Assessment makes a constructive contribution to teaching and a variety of assessment techniques are used in psychology from open-minded questions to decision making exercises, letter writing, oral presentations and fieldwork reports.

### **Key Stage Four**

There are key assessed activities in each unit of study at KS4. These are identified in the scheme of work and focus on particular knowledge, skills or places. All students complete these tasks and work is assessed using a common mark scheme based on National Curriculum level descriptors.

The department recognises that no single piece of work can test every aspect of the level descriptors. Assessments are viewed as pieces of evidence that together with other evidence from lessons, homework and discussion allow teachers to judge each student's overall performance and evaluate their 'best-fit' level.

Learning objectives and assessment criteria are shared with students. Every student has the level descriptors in 'student-friendly' language in their books (see appendix). These are referred to in lessons and thus students are familiar with the criteria against which they are assessed. The mark schemes and criteria for each assessed activity are made clear before the activity is begun and referred to again in feedback when the marked assessments are returned to students. Students identify and record a focus or target for improvement based on their performance and the level descriptors. Thus assessment is formative and criterion-referenced.

### **Evidence for Assessment**

Evidence of assessment can be found in:

- Student exercise books and files.
- Staff mark books.
- Excel spreadsheet files.

Students will know staff assessment of their work through:

- Written comments on their work.
- Oral feedback in lessons to individuals, groups or class.
- Grades and levels for assessments.
- School reports.
- Examination results and comments.
- Parents' Evenings.

## **MARKING**

Marking should always have a positive impact on student motivation and be constructive in its criticism. Marking involves reading and checking homework and classwork. It allows teachers to monitor progress in knowledge, effort, understanding and skills; offer guidance; give written and oral feedback; award marks and reward students. Marking is carried out on a regular basis. In KS4 students work is marked every 2 weeks if seen necessary or once a month if no assessment has been done. Students GCSE mock exam results need to be turned over within two weeks. All marking should be returned to students as soon as possible, preferably, by the next lesson. Corrections form an important part of marking. If necessary time should be spent in lessons reinforcing important concepts or skills to individuals or whole groups.

The school grades 9-1 may be used. Students will always have reference to the meaning of these grades and grades are always given with supporting comment. Teachers endeavour to write comments that:

- Praise good work and make clear exactly what is good about it.
- Identify areas for improvement and set targets and suggestions for action.
- Ask questions to encourage dialogue and understanding.

<b>GRADE DESCRIPTORS FOR GENERAL MARKING</b>
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## **GRADE 9**

- Consistently demonstrates excellent knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Tasks completed with flair.
- Majority of work, or key pieces, completed are outstanding.
- May have completed independent work or gone beyond instructions on some tasks to pursue interests and own ideas.

## **GRADE 7&8**

- Achieves virtually all tasks, including homework.
- Demonstrates clear understanding of key concepts.
- Overall, written work completed to a consistently high/very good standard.  
Including: Confident use of psychological vocabulary.  
Vast majority of skills executed competently, sometimes with flair.  
Demonstrates very good psychological knowledge
- Tackles new knowledge, skills and concepts with confidence.

## **GRADE 5&6**

- Achieves vast majority of tasks, including homework.
- Demonstrates sound understanding of key concepts.
- Overall, written work completed to a consistently good standard.  
Including: Sound use of psychological vocabulary.  
Most skills executed competently.  
Demonstrates sound psychological knowledge.
- Deals reasonably well with new knowledge, skills and concepts.

## **GRADE 4**

- Achieves key tasks, some may be incomplete.
- Demonstrates reasonable understanding of most key concepts.
- Much work is sound or reasonable although key aspects may lack quality/depth.  
Including: Uses some psychological vocabulary.  
Reasonable completion of key skills.  
Demonstrates reasonable psychological knowledge.
- Deals reasonably with most new knowledge, skills and concepts.

Updated 24/09/2022

### **GRADE 3**

- Significant number of tasks incomplete.
- Demonstrates limited understanding of key concepts.
- Overall, written work is limited, perhaps inadequate amount completed to enable progress.
- Lacks psychological vocabulary, many skills poorly complete obvious gaps in knowledge.

### **Staff Markbooks**

It is the teacher's responsibility to maintain a detailed, current and orderly mark book. Teachers should include record of:

- Absence
- Key assessment levels and grades
- Homework.
- Internal exam results.
- KS3 level
- KS4 level

### **REPORTS**

Subject reports are written according to the school calendar and guidance. Levels are awarded according GCSE grades at KS4. Comments focus on knowledge and understanding; skills; positive achievements; strengths and weaknesses and attitude. Comments are formative and give a focus for improvement, reference is also made to effort and homework.

### **HOMEWORK**

The department follows the school homework policy. The Department sets regular homework for all students in Years 10 to 11. Parental co-operation is valued. Homework tasks are varied and can include reading, research, writing, learning, sketching, and collecting information. Homework is of particular value in psychology as it is a good way of helping students realise that psychology happens outside the classroom. Major assignments may involve homework over several lessons.

The Department endeavours to set homework that is effective, that:



Updated 24/09/2022

- Raises achievement
- Motivates.
- Develops study skills.
- Encourages independent learning.

Homework in psychology is set and marked in order to:

- Assess student progress and mastery of work.
- Encourage ownership and responsibility for learning; provide opportunities for individual work and differentiation.
- Practice, consolidate and apply knowledge, understanding and skills covered in class.
- Instil organisational and time management skills.
- Prepare for classwork or coursework.
- Complete assessments.
- Use resources only available outside the classroom.
- Provide opportunities for parental involvement.

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

The department endeavours to:

- Provide a rich and challenging curriculum that stimulates every student to fulfil their potential whether the student is most able or has difficulties in psychology.
- Maintain high but achievable expectations of each student.
- Emphasise student achievements in every sphere.

Differentiation in the psychology scheme of work and lessons is broadly achieved:

**By task** - Different pupils are set different tasks, to satisfy specific needs or extension tasks are set.

**Through supported self study** - The provision of background materials which support specific themes or case studies and enable students to work alone or pursue their own interests.

**Through varied learning activities** - Lessons may involve problem solving exercises, role-play, decision-making exercises. The scheme of work incorporates a very wide variety of tasks thus satisfying a range of student learning styles and thinking skills. All of the students in one class need not necessarily work on the same type of activity.

**Through groupings** - Different groupings are arranged in lessons so that students of similar ability can work together. At other times students of a wide variety of abilities work in one group.

**Tasks that help develop perseverance and independence.** This is often best done with research tasks or problem solving activities. Such activities are integral to psychology and staff must ensure that the nature of the tasks set is challenging but also provide necessary knowledge and skills. All lessons should be planned with such tasks in mind and not confine them to 'one-off' differentiated lessons.

**Probing question and answer sessions.** In an environment where all students are considered gifted it is often very difficult to differentiate by resource or task as they are all capable of 'having a go'. Rigorous and searching questioning is a vital tool for differentiating in the classroom. For this technique to be valuable it is vital that there be a '**positive climate of enquiry**' in the classroom. Students should feel able to speak, confident to air their ideas and unafraid of being wrong. An able student should be allowed to take risks in their thinking and to 'think out loud'. This technique should be evident in most lessons and can focus on groups or individuals.

**Increasing the level of challenge** through questioning, task and resources, is an important way of enabling pupils to achieve highly, particularly the most able. Approaches include:

- Expecting greater independence
- Increasing pace
- Encouraging metacognition and self-review
- Increasing the proportion of higher order questions
- Widening the range of sources used by learners
- Introducing texts of greater density and abstraction
- Demanding greater precision in language
- Expecting pupils to justify their answers
- Providing more opportunities to transform and apply new ideas
- Providing more open-ended problem-solving tasks

*Source: Ferretti (2005) Challenging Gifted Geographers in Teaching Psychology Volume 30 Number 2 Summer 2005 pp82-85 quoting DfES 2002*

## **CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING THE MOST ABLE IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Updated 24/09/2022

The more able geographer will satisfy some of these criteria, rarely all. Some of these characteristics are influenced by personality so care should be taken in identifying the most able.

- Great intellectual curiosity; a desire to know the why's and how's of all events, dissatisfaction with simple explanations; ability to ask provocative and searching questions. Inquisitive.
- Superior reasoning ability; ability to deal with abstract concepts, such as that of sustainability, to generalise from facts and to see connections between various events and places. Ability to apply understanding in new contexts and to understand and explain complex interactions.
- Demonstrates appreciation of scale. Ability to explain and predict psychological change.
- Responds to varied tasks and possibly good at visualising situations. Appreciation of spatial characteristics. Possibly vivid imagination able to explore psychological ideas through creative work.
- Persistent, resourceful, motivated and self-directed; a determination to complete tasks to their own satisfaction; an ability to concentrate for long periods of time.
- Exceptional speed and agility of thought; rapid response to new ideas.
- Ability to learn quickly and easily; able to premeditate, often understanding what has to be done before full instructions are given; needing little or no practice to achieve competence.
- Good memory; limited need for revision. Wide and actively used vocabulary.
- Ability to evaluate own work and suggest improvements for further study. Can assess the relative merits of different approaches to psychological issues and their own study.
- Good powers of observation and attention to detail.
- Great initiative, confident and independent worker. Ability to pursue psychological ideas independently. Discerning and selective researcher. Ability to see the psychological focus no matter what the medium, such as 'seeing through' ICT and using it as a tool for tackling psychological issues and not an end in itself. Can critically assess information and media.
- Divergent thinking, particularly with problem solving.
- Inclination to share ideas and help and question others. Often able to demonstrate genuine empathy.

Continual teacher assessment and monitoring are important in identifying able geographers. Ability may manifest in a number of ways. All students are

Updated 24/09/2022

individual with their own needs. The Department is also aware of QCA guidance and understands that gifted geographers are likely to:

- Understand concepts clearly so that they can apply this understanding to new situations in order to make interpretations, develop hypotheses, reach conclusions and explore solutions.
- Communicate effectively using both the written and spoken word.
- Reason, argue and think logically, showing an ability to manipulate abstract symbols and recognise patterns and sequences.
- Enjoy using graphs, charts, maps, diagrams and other visual methods to present information.
- Be confident and contribute effectively when taking part in less formal teaching situations.
- Relate well to other people, showing an ability to lead, manage and influence others, appreciating and understanding others' views, attitudes and feelings.
- Have a more highly developed value system than most students of their age.
- Have a wide ranging general knowledge of the world.
- Be able to transfer knowledge from one subject to another.
- Be creative and original in their thinking, frequently going beyond the obvious solution to a problem.

*Source: Ferretti (2005) Challenging Gifted Geographers in Teaching Psychology Volume 30 Number 2 Summer 2005 pp82-85 quoting QCA NC site*

## **PSYCHOLOGY AND ICT**

### **The Importance of ICT to Psychology**

ICT is an important element of psychology. ICT allows students to develop enquiry skills; to access a wide range of psychological knowledge; understand environmental, temporal and spatial relationships; experience alternative images of people and places and consider the impact of technological developments on people and places.

## **ICT in Psychology Teaching**

Psychology students are given opportunities to develop and apply their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support learning. Such opportunities are identified in the scheme of work and assessed activities.

The National Curriculum (2000) document emphasises the importance of and relevance to psychology of ICT. In line with this document the department teaches students to:

- Select and use secondary evidence from ICT based sources.  
I.e. Use of Internet in Year 7 to begin investigating Rivers.
- Draw maps and plans, select and use graphical techniques using ICT.
- Communicate in different ways using ICT.
- Use ICT to complete decision-making exercises.

In psychology students are taught to:

- Find things out from a variety of ICT sources; select and synthesise this information and question its accuracy, bias and plausibility.
- Develop their own ideas using ICT to amend and refine work and to enhance its quality and accuracy.
- Exchange and share information.
- Critically review, modify and evaluate their work.

## **PSYCHOLOGY AND LITERACY**

Psychology is a diverse study of people, places and issues. Students are encouraged to ask and answer questions and to develop their own values and attitudes. Students must use a variety of written sources to gain summarise and synthesise psychological information. Students must communicate in written and oral form. The use of language is thus a vital component of psychology. The department views language as critical to differentiation and teaching at all levels.

## **Overview**

### **Writing**

Students are taught to use correct spelling and punctuation; follow grammatical conventions and to write in a logical and coherent manner. Opportunities for extended writing and for writing in a variety of styles are identified in the scheme of work. I.e. writing a letter to the UN to express views on development. Writing poetry to describe limestone landscapes.

### **Speaking**

Students are taught to use language precisely and cogently when speaking. There are individual and group oral presentations in the scheme of work, some of which are assessed activities. Students are encouraged to participate in debate, role-play and class discussion.

### **Listening**

Students are taught to listen to others, to respond and develop their own ideas constructively. Role-play and debate encourage aural skills and these are included in the scheme of work.

### **Reading**

The ability to read with understanding is vital in psychology. Students are taught to use a wide range of information sources; to locate and use specific information; to synthesise and adapt information and to follow arguments.

The dual nature of psychology allows students to develop a range of specialist vocabulary in human and physical topics. Students are also encouraged to consider the language required for different purposes. I.e. for comparison, for questioning, express causality.

The 'route to enquiry' approach is fundamental to psychology; the progression in questioning facilitates language developments – from identifying to locating to describing to explaining to predicting to hypothesising to evaluating.

### **Action: A Brief Overview**

**In the scheme of work** The scheme of work provides numerous opportunities for reading, summarising, synthesising and discussion. Key opportunities are highlighted.

Updated 24/09/2022

**In marking and assessment** Assessments in psychology are varied and allow students to develop the range of literacy skills. Communication skills are a vital component of the level descriptors and so are included in mark schemes and commented upon in marking. Spellings, punctuation and grammar are corrected in marking.

**In lessons** The scheme of work covers a wide range of learning activities and is planned to include all areas of literacy.

Other strategies include:

### **Link to Gifted and Talented**

The Head of Department has provided a resource called 'Psychology In Literature' which can be used selectively to supplement the National Curriculum and encourage the more able and develop literacy skills.

The aim of the department is to ensure each geographer is a:

- Shrewd and fluent reader.
- Confident writer.
- Effective speaker and listener.

### **PSYCHOLOGY AND NUMERACY**

Knowing about numbers, solving numerical problems and familiarity with numerical information such as graphs is integral to the study of psychology.

The department teaches students to:

- Draw and appropriately label a range of graphs by hand and using ICT.  
I.e. Drawing climate graphs (Year 8 Weather and Climate unit).
- Use numerical symbols and language correctly.

Updated 24/09/2022

- Use mental maths or calculators as appropriate and show workings if necessary.
- Be aware of the nature of data and possible bias.  
I.e. Coursework data presentation at KS4.

Numeracy skills and activities are referred to in the scheme of work. The Department will approach the Mathematics Department for advice should any new numeracy skills be included.

### **THINKING SKILLS IN PSYCHOLOGY – thinking about thinking.**

Thinking skills can focus on 'knowing how' as well as 'knowing what' – learning how to learn. The department is fully aware of the range of thinking skills, the theories of multiple intelligences and of the need to provide a variety of stimuli and learning activities to satisfy the variety of thinkers in any class. The scheme of work, particularly at KS3, has been planned to incorporate thinking skills. Teachers apply the thinking skills model (A. Rogers) in lesson planning.

Examples of learning activities for:

- 'Visual' thinkers - students may represent the impacts of global warming using pictures only.
- 'Auditory' thinkers - students may learn about drainage basin management through discussion and listening to expert opinion in a radio programme.
- 'Kinaesthetic' thinkers - students may learn about how relief is represented on a flat map by building contour models.

The 'route to enquiry' approach offers opportunities for information-processing, reasoning, creative thinking and evaluation. Thinking skills in psychology and related research are discussed at department meetings and good practise and lesson plans shared. Thinking skills and critical thinking are areas for continued development, particularly the use of language and questioning techniques.



## **THE PSYCHOLOGY SCHEME OF WORK**

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PSYCHOLOGY**

Psychology is a diverse, thought-provoking and dynamic subject. A great variety of teaching methods can be used. Our pupils are viewed as dynamic and active participants. The Psychology scheme of work takes an enquiry-based approach and is planned around student-centred learning. The department works towards helping students become independent learners and aims to use a variety of teaching methods to enable students to fulfil their potential.

The variety of teaching and learning strategies used can be seen in the scheme of work. Learning activities may involve individual or group work; written or oral work; role-play, games or fieldwork. Students use a variety of stimuli such as texts, statistics, photographs, videos or ICT. It is the responsibility of teachers to plan and manage learning and provide a stimulating classroom environment.

### **KEY STAGE FOUR**

The scheme of work includes ICT, literacy and numeracy strategies and incorporates NC changes, thinking skills, metacognition and a wide variety of learning activities. It is hoped that the KS4 scheme is a creative, varied, topical and interesting, that it utilises a wide range of resources and satisfies the needs of all students. KS4 aims to help all students fulfil their potential in Psychology, to become independent thinkers and skilled, knowledgeable psychologists. KS4 in Year 10 establishes and develops understanding of various topics in Psychology, competence in basic psychological concepts, develops knowledge of psychological issues and encourages students to begin making links with other mental illnesses.

Updated 24/09/2022

Year	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
YEAR 10	CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY	DEVELOPMENT	PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS
YEAR 11	SOCIAL INFLUENCE	MEMORY	REVISION / EXAM