

A Level Psychology was introduced into the school in 2002 and has become an increasingly popular option for students. From 2021 the subject has been offered in three option blocks to cater for the high demand. We currently have 48 Year 1 students and 51 Year 2 students spread across five groups. The teaching is shared between two teachers who are experts in A Level Psychology and each has different interests and specialisms within the field.

The aim of Psychology is to provide students with the fundamental skills and knowledge valued by higher education and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. As well as this, students should gain an understanding about themselves and others in a variety of different contexts.

Students are attracted to Psychology because it is a new subject for them which they find fascinating and different. Many show a particular interest in topics such as Psychopathology and Forensic Psychology which has sparked many students over the past few years to apply to study Psychology at university.

The specification taught at Waddesdon is AQA. The department has seen some excellent results at A level for a number of years with 100% of students achieving their FFT50 predictions in 2018. The department has been awarded 'Outstanding' from ALPs across a three-year trend.

All Year 12 students are enrolled on the two year A level course and take exams in May/June of the second year. Students are also expected to complete topic mini-tests at the end of each topic as well as class-based assessments in November (Year 1) and mock exams in January (Year 2) and the summer (Year 1).

The students find Psychology challenging at the beginning of the course because the topics are new and the vocabulary and concepts can be difficult for them to understand. However, after the January class assessment students begin to understand how the theories and studies link and to develop a Psychology mindset.

The specification aims to develop mathematical skills which can be applied to the psychological research of different behaviours. Ensuring students have a secure knowledge of these mathematical skills and are able to apply them to novel scenarios is an important part of the curriculum. With this, students are taught how psychological research is conducted, including the role of scientific enquiry and data analysis. Students then apply this to their own ethical scientific enquiries.

Many of the topics are governed by the specification. Where there are choices between topics, the department has selected areas that the students can relate to or have a particular interest in, for example Gender Development, Forensic Psychology and Schizophrenia. Students are taught about the foundations and origins of Psychology as well as Psychology as a science. Core topics include Attachment, Social Influence, Memory, Psychopathology and Issues and Debates within Psychology.

Psychology is a fun and interesting subject to teach. The department teaches a dynamic and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of students and inspires their intellectual curiosity.

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PSYCHOLOGY AT WADDESDON