

Faculty of English and Communications

The Faculty consists of ten members of staff: the Learning Director, two Curriculum Leaders (one English, one Psychology), plus two full-time and four part-time English specialists and two Psychology specialists. Across the faculty, we teach English Literature, English Language, Psychology, Media and Drama.

Psychology is an extremely popular A-Level option at SGHS, with around 40% of students taking it in three classes per year group. We currently have two Psychology specialists; the full-time role being advertised (a timetable that is entirely Psychology) and a second specialist who is also Assistant head (thus with the reduced timetable that warrants).

In Psychology, we follow the AQA A-level Specification, and our Psychology teachers take the lead across the school in disseminating research into the science of learning. We have a record of impressive results and the subject is one of the most popular choices in the whole of the sixth form. In 2019, at A2, we achieved 79% A*-B. The department consists of two members of staff and works very closely in collaboration with English.

Our results in English, Media and Drama are also consistently high. In 2019, 24 students received A*/A in A-Level Literature, with 80% in English Language achieving A*-B. At GCSE, our subject achieved a 0.6 progress score (100% 9-4), with 50% grade 7 in English Language and 65% in English Literature. GCSE Media Studies students achieved 75% 9-7 grades.

This reflects the faculty-wide commitment to exceptional quality of teaching and learning, and emphasis on staff professional development and autonomy. We review our curriculum offer regularly and are very open to new ideas. We feel that teaching is at its best when we can respond to the enthusiasms and expertise of both the teachers and students. All staff in the department play a leading role in developing innovative practice within the school, showcasing our work internally and at conferences nationwide. Our development of student leadership and co-construction has been particularly significant; lessons where students lead their learning and develop their own resources has led to an ethos which encourages student voice and their full involvement in the teaching and learning process.

This student-centered ethos permeates all we do, with much one-to-one support being offered. This personalized approach is highly valued by students who feel they are well-supported in their studies. We work closely with the students in reviewing their progress against target grades and we provide support and intervention where appropriate.

All students have their own laptops, and we balance the use of the VLE platform for resource and lesson content, including providing resources to challenge the most able and scaffold more difficult concepts. Our aim at SGHS is to teach to the top, building in the structures of support and self-regulation needed to succeed.

All members of the Faculty play a full part in the academic, pastoral and social life of the school, act as Personal Tutor and take part in the school's CPD programme. As the school promotes a distributed model of leadership there is ample opportunity for all staff to work with those in other faculties, showcase their work across the school and lead innovation according to an individual's areas of interest and expertise.

We also usually run an active extra-curricular programme, with activities including debating, creative writing, and the very popular FemSoc. In Psychology, we are in the early stages of introducing a careers based curriculum to mirror the AQA curriculum, offering students the opportunity to engage in academic talks with university lecturers, specialists of psychology and NHS staff. There is also a newsletter published regularly which highlights current news stories, journals, documentaries and much more for students to access outside of their lessons.

Our intention statement for Psychology is below:

"The study of Psychology at A Level allows young people to explore and understand the thoughts, processes, influences and biases behind human behaviour in society over time and culture. It enhances a wide range of skills, including communication through questioning and debate, tolerance of alternative opinions through empathy and understanding and analytical skills through exposure to scientific research.

In an ever-changing society, Psychology continues to grow in both popularity and relevance with its foci being the understanding of human behaviour. Its power sits in its impact on everything from health and happiness to destruction and conflict in society.

The aim of the department is to build a course in which students explore a broad range of key psychological concepts, while learning to appreciate the human condition but also critically appraise the theory and research on which our understanding is built.

Our intention is to create lessons that engage students' curiosity and encourage the development of enquiring minds.

There is a clear focus on skills such as how to carry out research and how to present a balanced argument- skills that students can take forward in their future learning and employment."