



PYRLAND SCHOOL

Psychology

Curriculum Booklet for 2024 - 2025

Subject Lead: Mrs Cozens

Psychology Curriculum Intent:

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled."

Plutarch

Our students live in a complex, unpredictable world where understanding themselves and others has never been more vital. The Psychology curriculum empowers learners to explore the thoughts, feelings and behaviours that shape human experience, allowing them to make sense of a world that can often feel overwhelming. By examining topics such as mental health, social influence, memory and sleep, students gain the tools to critically evaluate their own perceptions and those of others, applying psychological knowledge to their lives and society with insight, resilience and empathy.

Our Psychology course, as a single tier of entry, is inclusive of all learners. In addition to the academic knowledge developed, it encourages the wider growth of every student, placing a strong emphasis on shaping their emotional, moral, and social understanding. The curriculum's content — ranging from memory, developmental psychology, mental health, neuropsychology, and social influence — exposes students to a breadth of theories, research studies, and contemporary applications. This allows them to understand both the biological and environmental factors that shape human behaviour.

Through exploration of key studies and critical examination of evidence, students gain an understanding of how psychologists apply scientific methods to investigate and interpret human experience. The curriculum prioritises the ability to evaluate evidence, construct logical arguments, and approach questions with both critical awareness and ethical sensitivity. These capabilities are foundational for further academic progression — including A Level Psychology and related disciplines — and highly valued across careers in medicine, law, education, business, and public service.

More than just a subject, Psychology encourages deep reflection on oneself and others. It promotes resilience, open-mindedness, and emotional intelligence by tackling complex questions, challenging assumptions, and considering a range of perspectives. In doing so, students learn to understand behaviour, question prejudice, and contribute thoughtfully and compassionately to society.

Looking further, as advances in psychology, neuropsychology, and mental health continue to shape our understanding of the world and ourselves, a foundation in Psychology becomes vital. This makes our curriculum an essential starting point for students — inspiring inquiry, nurturing critical thinking, and empowering the next generation to engage with an increasingly diverse and evolving world. Students leave Pyrland with the knowledge and skills needed for further study at A Level, a course that is offered at the local Sixth Form College.

Psychology Curriculum Implementation:

This KS4 subject builds on the analytical and critical thinking skills developed in English, applying inference, evaluation, and argumentation to the interpretation of psychological studies and theories. In tandem, Maths provides the foundation for data analysis, statistical calculations, and graphical interpretation, ensuring students can understand and apply research methods effectively.

Students are taught in mixed ability groups, reflecting the single-tier nature of the qualification. Regular lowstakes quizzing, midpoint reviews, and end of unit assessments track progress and build exam readiness. Informal checks, including targeted questioning and live feedback, maintain high expectations and academic rigour throughout.

Units such as Social Influence and Mental Health investigate identity, discrimination, and stereotypes, promoting empathy and a nuanced understanding of diversity. British Values — including liberty, tolerance, and the rule of law — are embedded throughout, especially when discussing obedience, justice, and ethics in psychological practice.

In Research Methods, students design, conduct, and evaluate investigations, acquiring analytical and evaluative skills vital for further study across psychology, science, and the humanities. In doing so, students become confident, reflective, and resilient learners, well-prepared for future academic or career pathways and ready to apply their psychological knowledge to an ever-changing world.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

Lessons per fortnight	Year 10	Year 11
	6	6

Year 10 GCSE Psychology Programme of Study

Exam Board: OCR

Exam Specification: J203

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	Criminal Psychology: Students build critical thinking and evaluation skills by applying psychological theories, interpreting data, and ethical debate, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is criminal behaviour? How do psychological theories explain why people commit crimes?• How can we evaluate psychological research, like Cooper & Mackie and Heaven?• What are the aims and effectiveness of different punishments and rehabilitative approaches?	Criminal Psychology End of unit test Time: 1 hour* Marks: 40 marks
2	Development: Students explore how psychology informs education, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does brain development affect thinking and learning across life stages?• What do Piaget's stages tell us about how children learn?• How do mindset and motivation impact educational success?• What are the limits of using IQ to measure intelligence?	Development End of Unit Test Time: 1 hour* Marks: 40 marks
3	Psychological Problems: Students explore definitions, causes, and treatments of mental illness, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have definitions and perceptions of changed over time?• What biological and psychological factors contribute to schizophrenia and depression?• How do stigma and discrimination affect individuals?• What role does society play in the causes and treatment?	Psychological Problems End of Unit Test Time: 1 hour* Marks: 40 marks
4	Memory: Students explore how memory works, how it can fail or be influenced, and how this knowledge is applied in the real-world, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does memory work to process and store information?• How does brain structure affect memory, and what happens when it is damaged?• In what ways do theories of memory explain real-life behaviours, such as responses to advertising?	Memory End of Unit Test Time: 1 hour* Marks: 40 marks
5	Research Methods (extended project): Students develop skills in designing and designing psychological research, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you create clear and testable hypotheses?• What types of variables are important to identify and control?• How do different research methods impact the design and outcome?• What strategies can be used to ensure reliability and validity in research design?	Extended Time: 40 mins Marks: 40 marks
6	Social Influence: how and why people's behaviour changes under social pressure, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do crowd behaviour and social context affect individual actions?• What psychological theories explain bystander intervention or apathy?• How can understanding social influence help address real-world issues like peer pressure or prejudice?	Year 10 Exam GCSE Paper 1 Time: 1 hour 30 Marks: 90 marks

*1 hour assessments to be completed in a double lesson to allow for extra time

Year 11 GCSE Psychology Programme of Study

Exam Board: OCR

Exam Specification: J200

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	Sleep and Dreaming: Students build critical analysis, evaluation, and application skills by exploring biological and psychological explanations, enabling them to answer these key questions: of sleep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do biological processes regulate sleep and dreaming? What psychological theories explain dreaming? How do sleep disorders develop and affect individuals? What treatments and lifestyle changes can improve sleep quality? 	Sleep and Dreaming End of Unit Test Time: 40 mins Marks: 40 marks
2	Paper 1 Revision Review key theories and studies on crime, social influence, and eyewitness reliability in Criminal Psychology. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand major developmental theories and research on cognitive and social growth. Learn symptoms, causes, and treatments of common psychological disorders, evaluating their effectiveness. Master research methods including experimental design, ethics, data analysis, and study evaluation. 	GCSE Mock Exam Paper 1 Time: 1 hour 30 Marks: 90 marks
3	Research Methods (Extended project): Students develop skills in analysing and evaluating a new data set, enabling them to answer these key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we interpret data from new and unfamiliar psychological studies? What research methods are best suited for analysing novel psychological data? How do ethical considerations influence the interpretation and use of research findings? How can critical thinking be applied to evaluate the validity of unfamiliar psychological research? 	Extended Project Time: In lesson time Marks: 40 marks
4	Paper 2 Revision Review key theories and studies on the effects of conformity, obedience, and social roles in Social Influence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the models, processes, and factors affecting Memory, including forgetting. Learn the functions, theories, and disorders related to Sleep and Dreaming. Apply research methods knowledge 	GCSE Mock Exam Paper 2 Time: 1 hour 30 Marks: 90 marks
5	Exam preparation Students gain further confidence in decoding exam questions and structuring their answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the questioning asking me to do/show? What theories are relevant here? What evidence can I use? 	Topic specific assessment practise Time: 40 mins Marks: 40 marks
6	Final Exams Studies and applications in psychology 1 Studies and applications in psychology 2	Final GCSE Exams Paper 1 – 1 hour 30 Paper 2 – 1 hour 30 Marks: 90 marks

Final GCSE Assessment Structure:

Component	Weighting (%)	Content	Proposed Examination Date
Paper 1	50%	Studies and applications in psychology 1 1 hour 30 minutes 90 marks, written paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Criminal Psychology- Development- Psychological Problems- Research Methods	May/June Year 11
Paper 2	50%	Studies and applications in psychology 2 1 hour 30 minutes 90 marks, written paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social Influence- Memory- Sleep and Dreaming- Research Methods	May/June Year 11

Please see exam board websites for up to date information: [GCSE - Psychology \(9-1\) - J203](#)