

Psychology - Curriculum Intent

Curriculum Priorities

The Psychology Curriculum at Nottingham Girls' Academy is designed to develop subject specific knowledge as well as play its part in developing cross-curricular skills and personal qualities. NGA is rich and diverse in its cohort and we work with young women who are confident, aspiring and determined. Within the delivery of content we aim to celebrate diversity i.e. highlighting research or theories produced by a variety of academics.

Psychology as the scientific study of the mind and behaviour enables our girls to become analytical thinkers. In the diverse school community we have, our students will learn to demonstrate principles of empiricism and an ability to present evidence to explain a range of human behaviours, analyse patterns over time and design appropriate interventions. Students will gain several skills centring in logic, evaluation and real-world application, all of which relate to SMSC development. The extended writing within the course teaches students how to write coherently and develops confidence in communicating their ideas, all of which are key skills in the working world.

Knowledge

For those who study this subject at **Key Stage 5** we want students to be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, research methods and ethical issues.
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the content in a range of contexts.
- analyse, interpret and evaluate psychological concepts, theories, research studies and research methods.
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness.
- Have knowledge and understanding of research methods, practical research skills and mathematical skills will be assessed. These skills should be developed through study of the specification content and through ethical practical research activities, involving: *designing research, conducting research, analysing and interpreting data, evaluating research, developments and theories.*

Skills

The skills we aim to develop are:



Literacy & Numeracy



Communication



Problem Solving



Metacognition



Leadership



Collaboration



Physical,
Practical &
Technical



Digital Literacy

For example:

Literacy & Numeracy: Literacy is integral to all lessons as it is an essay-based subject. Students are exposed to a wide range of texts (journals, essays, reports), enabling them to become confident readers and develop their own written communication for students with English as their home language and students with English as an additional language in our school community.

Numeracy is regularly explored in lessons and assessed in short exam questions where students are expected to understand graphs, measures of dispersion and statistical data.

Communication: Most lessons begin with short debates over a lesson question. Students participate in short presentations and work collaboratively in small groups. Written communication is well developed in relation to evaluative synopticity, logical and coherent structuring of written responses in the examinations.

Problem Solving: Our theoretical lessons require our girls to weigh up the significance of different psychological approaches, methods employed and the contrasting views offered within the discipline.

Leadership: Group work (throughout the course) requires students to work together but also allow someone to take the lead in discussion and feedback. We aim to have good representation within leadership roles in school, so all students can see themselves reflected.

Collaboration: Group work is common throughout all of the course, our girls are encouraged to work collaboratively with students from all walks of life.

Metacognition: Most lessons will begin with a thought-provoking question/scenario. Girls within our community are able to reflect on their current views and perceptions and gain an awareness of how their view or opinion may develop/change by the end of the lesson/topic.

Students' greater understanding of the mechanisms of memory and decision making allow them to be more strategic and efficient in navigating complex tasks.

Physical, Practical and Technical: Students design their own research project which requires practical and technical skills.

Digital Literacy: When students conduct research projects, they will use ICT skills to create graphs, tables etc.

Qualities

The qualities we aim to develop are:



For example:

Respect: Our girls will regularly discuss sensitive issues throughout the course and learn to consider their approach before contributing their view or opinion if it may be controversial.

Kindness: Through group work in most lessons, students will be supporting each other with their learning.

Tolerance: Our girls discuss controversial topics within all units; they will learn that differing views and opinions exist within the classroom. Students studying the specification content look at various causes of a broad spectrum of behaviours, resulting in more tolerant and empathetic individuals.

Resilience: Whilst learning about the various life challenges faced by individual students learn that they must combat these issues with resilience if they come across them within their own lives. e.g. challenging stereotypes, social injustices.

Creativity: Students create their own research proposal within the research methods unit. Students create memory models and concept maps to demonstrate learning.

Positivity: All students will learn about how research findings and developments in scientific data collection can positively improve the lives of people.

Integrity: Most lessons are based on controversial questions where students are given the opportunity to share their honest views on the subject whilst remaining respectful of other students.

Aspiration: All our girls aspire to gain more knowledge and demonstrate progress and share their achievements over time. Students are exposed to research that has changed the lives of several groups of people, particularly women.

Empathy: Our girls discuss contemporary issues including whether deception is ever acceptable in a research context? This will ensure students understand the challenges faced by researchers and the impact that such decisions can have on participants.

Curriculum Principles

Sequencing, Learning and Assessment

Our curriculum has been structured to take into account the cognitive science of how we learn. Key knowledge is covered sequentially and deliberately revisited and built upon. Spaced practice and retrieval are a feature of the curriculum structure.

This is further reinforced by:

- Learning Challenge: a purely formative assessment to help evaluate, and then reshape learning and address misconceptions at the end of each unit.
- Learning Consolidation: a summative assessment, taken at a planned interval from the end of the unit, to help evaluate retention of learning in the long-term memory.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is developed throughout the curriculum with deliberate opportunities for all our girls (but especially disadvantaged students) to experience aspects of the taught curriculum through trips, events and activities and broaden students horizons and aspirations. We aim always to close gaps in attainment at all times in our curriculum delivery.

For example:

Tutor2u conference:

Students attend a conference with several other psychology students from across the country, hosted and lead by experts in the field. The students experience an interactive day focused on enhancing skills and equipping students with techniques to excel in examinations. Our girls are given a booklet and a password to interactive resources for revision and are given opportunities to speak and compete with others when demonstrating their knowledge. This has been an annual trip for several years and one which student thoroughly enjoy, whilst improving their chances of success on the course by excellent and engaging keynote speakers. This provides the opportunity for a university lecture style experience, as well universalism of standards when listening and responding to other students from other schools nationally. As a school we subsidise the cost of such trips to ensure all students get the opportunity to attend and enhance performance outcomes.

Examples of trips include:

Freud museum London – linked to the Approaches unit, the emergence of Psychology as a science, Issues and Debates unit

University of Oxford visit – linked to the research processes in Psychology including lectures from the Oxford Research Participation Programme

Loftus Keynote speaker conference – linked to the Memory unit and women in Psychology.

Mental health nursing lectures – careers linked to psychology

Equality

We want our curriculum to reflect what it means to be a young, British woman today; for our students to know about the struggle and sacrifice that has led to the freedom and opportunity they have. We want them to know about their heritage and culture, and that of others in our community, enabling them to celebrate it and contribute to the progress of democracy as global citizens. We therefore regularly review and consult on the equality of our curriculum.

For example:

- Students study elements of gender and culture bias and its impact on society and the steps needed for society to become more equitable and thus furthering social justice.
- Content considers stigma, stereotypes and addressing these in relation to students becoming more informed citizens who can empower themselves and others
- Culture is a key theme in psychology in terms of variance in human behaviour. We often consider how key variables can be operationalised in different cultures and how imposed etic can sometimes be an issue in the research process. Students also learn the importance of improved practices within the discipline including avoiding culture bias when researching and collecting data.

Careers and Employability

To support our students growing understanding of how our subject might support them with employment, we plan in explicit links between their subject area and possible career pathways. Examples of the careers and sectors we highlight are:

- Psychology as a discipline lends itself to many areas of working life. Students of Psychology can go on to become chartered psychologists, specialising in educational, occupations, forensics health or sports.
- Other career routes are vast and may include healthcare, mental health support, education and generally areas with people focused roles.
- The scientific and research elements of the course lend themselves to human resources, marketing, advertising, marketing, retail managements, accountancy, journalism and many more.