

**Psychology has become integral to an understanding of our society. Its ramifications extend to sport, education, health, crime and personal development.**

Modern Psychology has its roots in philosophy but has moved away from an armchair stance to a 'hands-on' approach which aims to observe and measure human nature objectively through experimentation and logical inference.

One of the first lessons in Psychology aims to instil in students the difference between common sense Psychology, based on personal anecdote, and academic Psychology, based on theory and research. The Psychology that we study can be described as the scientific study of human behaviour, emotions and mental processes; it is essentially about people and why they behave as they do and it is uniquely challenging as, unlike other disciplines, we are actually studying ourselves.

The department follows the AQA specification which raises the profile of Psychology as a practical way of investigating human behaviour. The course reflects this in its emphasis on conducting research in the real world and relating Psychology to everyday life.

### **First Year of the course**

The first year of the course introduces pupils to a variety of elements of Psychology; providing a sound grounding in the subject.

The course includes the following:

- Cognitive Psychology concentrates on ways in which people use their memories, exploring the reliability of memory in eyewitness testimony.
- Developmental Psychology focuses on the development of attachments in humans and the impact these can have on adult behaviour.
- Research Methods provides pupils with the skills to carry out their own psychological experiments.
- Social Psychology analyses how the presence of others affects our thoughts, feelings and behaviour and includes the study of conformity and obedience.
- Psychopathology addresses the questions 'What is abnormality?' and 'Why do people develop abnormal behaviour patterns?'. There will be an in-depth look at phobias, depression and OCD.
- Approaches in Psychology provides pupils with an introduction to many of the main theories that are used to explain human behaviour, including the Behavioural, Psychodynamic and Biological approaches.

### **Second Year of the course**

The second year of the course will develop the ideas covered during the first year, but introduce more depth of study in other areas of the course.

Possible topics to be covered include:

- Relationships which considers the way in which relationships are formed, maintained and might end.
- Forensic psychology where both biological and psychological explanations of offender behaviour are explored and the most appropriate ways to deal with offending behaviour and reducing recidivism rates are analysed.
- Schizophrenia will look at the clinical characteristics and possible causes, both biological and psychological of the disorder.

Psychology is a useful subject that gives students the opportunity to learn how to analyse arguments and evidence, test hypotheses and make informed judgements – all skills valued by Higher Education institutions and employers. These skills are developed throughout the course allowing pupils to appreciate the scientific nature of the subject.

As part of the course pupils are offered the opportunity to attend A Level Psychology Conferences where they can enjoy a day of lectures by well-known researchers and writers in the field of Psychology.



*Chester Zoo Animal Behaviour Study Trip*