



Social Sciences- Psychology, Sociology, Health and Social Care & Child Development and Care

The Social Sciences department encompasses a range of different subjects namely Psychology, Sociology, Health and Social Care and Child Development and Care. Social Sciences gives students a better understanding of the world in which they live and encourages them to challenge assumptions about taken for granted social phenomena. This could range from issues to do with race and crime, class and educational outcomes to how and why attachment in the early years can be a precursor to typical and atypical development. In turn this will increase student's ability to make positive contributions to the world as they are equipped with the knowledge to challenge the status quo and also empathise with how the lives of individuals are impacted by a range of external factors. This is achieved through a broadened understanding of human behaviour. Learners will begin to analyse the world around them in new ways, understanding why people become complicit in horrific incidents such as the holocaust and how mental health issues such as addiction and depression are formed and treated. Students will become critical thinkers, developing their cultural and academic capital allowing them to participate fully in society, demonstrating empathy and therefore kindness to others. This is achieved through a curriculum which is designed to equip students with a rich vocabulary, a questioning approach and powerful knowledge of society around them, all key ingredients to enable students to demonstrate excellence, be successful in their approach and not be confined to the limitations that a stratified society can place on the most disadvantaged.

The Social Sciences department takes an evidence informed approach to teaching and learning. We use the concepts of cognitive science, memory research and large-scale research studies to place our 'best bets' on how we can effectively teach and enhance student's learning. Through an understanding of how the human brain learns, we ensure that there is evidence underpinning our curriculum approach and pedagogy. This has led to a curriculum which focusses on the powerful knowledge that learners need to be successful citizens with high aspirations in life. Our key aim is that this knowledge is used to ultimately help and understand others and ourselves. In Psychology, this is achieved through gaining knowledge of competing psychological theories and research studies. This knowledge then allows learners to develop higher-level skills of evaluation, which they then use to understand strengths, limitations and comparisons.

Early on in the course we study the brain and the developments in technology to understand and diagnose a range of types of neurological damage. This then progresses to more acquired knowledge of therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and how medications for addiction and depression work and their usefulness, how amnesia and prosopagnosia are acquired and the effects of neurological damage on people's lives. It is here that we make cross curricular links with science, through teaching the function of the central nervous system and with maths through teaching the necessary skills for data analysis. Through learning the different strands of psychology, students are introduced to the variety of careers available in the field, such as educational psychology, work in the criminal justice system and careers in clinical therapies and counselling.

In sociology, underpinning knowledge of theories are used to then be able to examine issues such as inequality in the education system and in the criminal justice system and how this leads to a stratified society. Learners understand the complexity of society and begin to move away from simplistic viewpoints.

Opening minds, opening doors.

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They move from thinking that the working class are responsible for crime in society to learning that most middle class and corporate crimes go unreported and the reasons why. They move from believing that males and females have different biological traits which then leads them into particular roles/careers in society to seeing that these constraints are actually a product of the home, education and the media. They move from thinking that people with disabilities have something wrong with them to seeing that it is actually the way society is set up that leads to someone becoming disabled. This empowers students not only with knowledge but a shift in perspective of how society works, so in turn will make it easier for them to identify injustice and navigate it confidently. We believe that knowledge and retention of knowledge in the long-term memory is a prerequisite for the more complex processes such as analysis and evaluation. A booklet approach to lesson design ensures that the working memory does not become overloaded. They ensure that content is precise and provide opportunities for step by step modelling, combined with a visualizer, so that students can learn from an expert approach. This approach promotes inclusivity as children with SEND benefit from having the work in front of them to aid memory. Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) stated that 'Research has provided overwhelming evidence that, for everyone but experts, partial guidance during instruction is significantly less effective than full guidance.' On discovery learning 'Only the brightest students make the discovery.' We subscribe to a pedagogical approach of direct instruction in Social Sciences and the booklet/visualizer approach, combined with continuous revisiting of prior knowledge through spaced and retrieval practice, ensures that learning is long term and that students remember more.

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