



## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact**

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#### **Intent**

We aim to create the very best Psychology and Sociology students. The aim of our curriculum is to equip students with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to be able to understand and explain the causes of human behaviour and the impact of this behaviour on wider society and the enthusiasm to study these subjects to the best of their ability. We do this by constantly demonstrating our own enthusiasm for the subjects we teach and using quality first teaching to ensure students understand underlying Psychological and Sociological principles and terminology and can apply them in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar contexts. We want students to be able to think analytically and reach logical conclusions based on scientific evidence.

Our curriculum at North Halifax Grammar School (NHGS) goes far beyond what is taught in lessons, for whilst we want students to achieve the very best examination results possible, we believe our curriculum goes beyond what is examinable. As a department we offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities from providing wider reading opportunities via articles and links on our Google classrooms and hosting an in house revision conference tailored specifically to our students from a senior examiner to facilitating the student run feminist club and psychsoc. We also offer academic drop-in lunchtime sessions at least twice a week so that if any student needs to ask for help with work or exam practice they can come and find the staff member on duty and are available via email if these times do not suit all students.

Our curriculum supports the ethos statement of the school. Students are constantly challenged to work collaboratively and think independently when engaging in all lessons and class debates. Most lessons encourage students to discuss and draw their own conclusions. We regularly use whiteboards to explore ideas during activities and provide students with discussion and think time when we pose questions, having previously planned class seating arrangements to maximise these opportunities and ensure students make progress. This ensures our students feel responsible for their own learning and encourages active engagement, motivation and participation in lessons. We have tailor made all our own lesson materials to ensure they are engaging and to promote topical discussion and encourage students to develop an enquiring mind. We have invested a great deal of time and effort to create and maintain a fantastic set of resources that challenge our students and allow them to develop their independent thinking and thirst for learning. These include student work booklets, lesson PowerPoints, revision checklists, Blooket and Kahoot quizzes and additional activity handouts.

As a knowledge based curriculum we believe that knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills; both are entwined. Content is delivered to students and then built upon

through a variety of practice questions, with regular quality feedback being given to support student progress. Through regular teacher modelling demonstrations and use of WAGOLLS and WAPOLLS we encourage our students to demonstrate manners, respect and tolerance in Psychology and Sociology lessons whilst celebrating success and demonstrating that any mistakes made are an important part of the learning process. This allows students to see what is required of them and encourages them to express themselves in a confident manner when applying those skills in other contexts/scenarios. The knowledge acquired then allows students to develop their analytical and critical thinking skills.

Cultural Capital is embedded throughout the Social Sciences curriculum. Our students are introduced to a wide variety of viewpoints from some of the most influential Psychologists and Sociologists throughout history. We study the impact that their work has had on the world we live in and students are encouraged to make links between their studies and real life examples. They are expected to analyse the relative contributions of competing theories in order to discuss their impact on our understanding of human behaviour and society as a whole. They are also encouraged to keep up to date with current events and try to make links between what they are learning and how it could explain or be applied to better understand the world around them.

In addition to our aims, our curriculum design includes revisiting and building on existing knowledge. We ensure the level of challenge is high enough for the most able, with scaffold and support available for students who need it. Our lessons are planned so that students can access learning at a level that is appropriate for them but also encourages them to seek out opportunities to make the best progress they can and to strive to achieve their best.

## **Implementation**

Collaborative, detailed and thorough curriculum planning lies at the heart of what we do in the department. We are committed to a three-year plan of developing our schemes of work. We design and use student work booklets and lesson PowerPoints to ensure that the content in our subjects is taught to consistent high standards across multiple teaching groups. We use all available resources and teaching strategies to ensure that students have a comprehensive knowledge of the specifications and are capable of going beyond what is taught in lessons. While making constant synoptic links between new learning and previous knowledge. We have regular discussion with students about using previously taught content from other topic areas like approaches and issues and debates and real world applications in their evaluation of the theories and concepts we teach in lessons and apply this to exam question planning and answering.

We also use a variety of techniques to help develop long-term memory and help students master subject content that are embedded in the curriculum, such as using Blookets and Kahoots as regular starter and plenary activities in lessons. This is in addition to setting a variety of consolidation tasks as homeworks that require students to trial different methods, such as creation of knowledge organisers, mind maps, Cornell notes and flash cards/quizlets. We also complete assessment wrappers for end of year and mock examinations to enable students to reflect on their work and preparation pre and post exam. These activities are all focussed on embedding challenge, metacognition, memory techniques, numeracy and literacy into our departmental curriculum.

In Psychology and Sociology we also implement our curriculum through using a variety of teaching strategies as well as more traditional skills practice. All staff in the department make

full use of the Google applications for education and all students use this to access the departmental resources both in lessons and remotely. Staff all regularly post lesson resources (ppts, work booklets and activities) to the Google classroom for students to access during and outside of lessons to help our students truly become independent learners. In addition, they often add links to useful video resources, revision materials or web links that signpost students towards wider reading opportunities. Students can also access their online textbook and revision companions via the links on their Google classroom so can continue their learning and wider reading between lessons in their study periods or at home.

## **Impact**

We know our curriculum is working in the Social studies department through the engagement and commitment that our students demonstrate in all lessons across all key stage areas. The engagement of students in the department can be observed in lessons and recorded in student voice. The number of students choosing to study Psychology and Sociology at KS5 are very high. We usually have around 45% of students choose to study Psychology as 1 of their 3 A level choices and around 11% choose to study Sociology in Year 12 and our retention rates are very high. Due to increased interest in the past few years we have expanded the department and have had to add additional teaching groups, particularly in A-level Psychology. We now regularly have 4 groups of Psychology and in Year 12 and 4 groups of Psychology in Year 13. In addition to this, the number of our students go on to study the subjects further at university rises every year. We have also supported students who have successfully been accepted at Oxbridge universities for further study of our subjects.

As a result of the high interest in the subject throughout the school and quality of teaching and learning in the department we also recently expanded the department by introducing GCSE Psychology at KS4. Since then we have become one of the most popular optional subject choices regularly with 2 groups of 29 students in Year 10 and 2 groups of 29 students in Year 11. These high numbers clearly demonstrate that students in our department have developed an enthusiasm and thirst for learning our subjects, despite having no prior experience of the subjects prior to KS4.

The quality of teaching and learning in Psychology and Sociology has been praised during learning walks by both external and internal observers. In support of this the examination results are consistently above the national average and among the best in the school at A-level and GCSE.

More importantly, students frequently and confidently express their enjoyment of Psychology and Sociology, the quality of teaching they have received and their appreciation of the enthusiasm, knowledge and study skills they have gained from the department that they take with them. In addition to this, they have also developed a range of very transferable skills in enquiring, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation and the ability to make links between what they have learnt in lessons and how this applies to life outside the classroom. We have alumni students who have become published researchers or gone on to study for their PhD in areas of Psychology they started to learn about during their time at NHGS. We know this because our alumni students often stay in touch via email to share their accomplishments with us.