

SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY AT WADDESDON

The Sociology Department

A Level Sociology was introduced at Waddesdon in 2017. It has become a popular choice at A Level with healthy class sizes. We currently have 25 Year 12 students and 17 Year 13 undertaking the course. The teaching is shared between two teachers who take on different topics within the course as well as team teaching across others.

The aim of Sociology is to provide students with the fundamental skills and knowledge that is valued by higher education and employers including critical analysis, independent thinking and application. Students are attracted to Sociology because it is a new subject which they find fascinating and different. They also enjoy the opportunity to draw upon their own experiences for example within the institution of the Family or Education and apply this experience of the theories taught within lessons. Many show a particular interest in the topic of Crime and Deviance which has inspired a number of A Level students to apply to study Criminology at university this year.

The specification taught at Waddesdon is AQA. The department saw some very promising results at AS level in 2018, achieving an ALPs grade of 4 (Good) in its first year of teaching.

In September 2018, we removed the requirement to study AS, so Sociology is now delivered as a two year course, culminating in A Level examinations. Students are expected to complete

end of topic mini-tests at the end of each topic as well as class-based assessments in January (Year 1) and mock exams in the summer.

The students find Sociology challenging at the beginning of the course because the topics are new and the vocabulary and concepts can be difficult for them to understand. However, students begin to develop a 'Sociological View' of the world around them and through support with their written work and activities that require them to apply their understanding to contemporary society, their understanding goes from strength to strength.

Some topics taught on the course are governed by the specification; these include education with methods in context, theory and methods and crime and deviance. Students are also taught options such as families and households and beliefs in society. Students learn to apply their understanding from the perspectives in Sociology and differing sociological concepts to the topic areas.

The topic areas that have been chosen, aim to encourage students develop an understanding of different social groups such as gender, ethnicity and social classes within institutions that they are familiar with. The intent is for students to develop compassion towards these differing groups in society, encourage understanding and breakdown prejudice through critical analysis and evaluation of theories.

The Psychology Department

A Level Psychology was introduced into the school in 2002. Since then, it has become an increasingly popular option for students and since 2010 it is offered in two option blocks. We currently have 49 Year 1 students and 36 Year 2 students spread across the four different groups. The teaching is shared between two teachers who are experts in A Level Psychology and each have different interests and specialisms within the field.

Students are attracted to Psychology because it is a new subject for them which they find fascinating and different. Many show a particular interest in topics such as psychopathology and forensic psychology which has sparked many students over the past few years to apply to study Psychology at University.

The specification taught at Waddesdon is AQA. The department has seen some excellent results at A Level for a number of years with 100% of students achieving or their predictions in 2018. The department is consistently awarded 'Outstanding' from ALPs across a three-year trend.

The specification aims to develop mathematical skills which can be applied to the psychological research of different behaviours. Ensuring students have a secure knowledge of these mathematical skills and are then able to apply them to novel scenarios is an important part of the curriculum.

In conjunction with this, students are taught how psychological research is conducted including the role of scientific enquiry and data analysis. Students then apply this to their own ethical scientific enquiries.

Many of the topics are governed by the specification; however where there are choices between topics, the department has chosen areas that the students can relate to or have a particular interest in, for example Gender Development, Forensic Psychology and Schizophrenia. Students are taught about the foundations and origins of Psychology as well as Psychology as a Science. Core topics include Attachment, Social Influence, Memory, Psychopathology and Issues and Debates within Psychology.

Why teaching Sociology and Psychology Matters

Both Sociology and Psychology are fun and interesting subjects to teach. Equally, the students at Waddesdon School are motivated to learn and have a positive view of these subjects. The department prides itself on teaching a dynamic and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of its students and creates well-rounded citizens who have curiosity to understand our ever changing society.

