



KING JAMES'S  
SCHOOL  
KNARESBOROUGH

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

SOCIOLOGY

2021/22

In Sociology we have two major objectives in terms of the curriculum. As a subject discipline, sociology encourages students to think critically about the social world and to challenge their previously held assumptions. They must examine the world through a range of alternative perspectives. We deliver a curriculum that enables students to become more engaged citizens with the capacity to respond in a sensitive way to social problems. How, for example, to understand and practically address issues relating to social inequality, climate change and discrimination.

Secondly, Sociology is a central discipline within the Social Sciences. We provide an inclusive but challenging curriculum that enables all students to achieve their full potential. This enables our students to achieve a qualification that opens the door to many different career pathways and Post 18 choices.

When designing the sociology curriculum, we are mindful that in order to develop and demonstrate the key skills of application, analysis and evaluation, the students need to build a sound knowledge base. Furthermore, we believe that it becomes easier for students to build that substantive knowledge base by relating the course to students' own personal experiences and prior learning. We are also trying to implement Rosenshine's Principles in Action in relation to the way the content is delivered. We focus on applying contemporary examples of social issues and problems in order to debate different sociological perspectives and theories. We build up disciplinary knowledge by embedding theory and methods throughout the course. We give students regular opportunities to assess their own progress by completing a variety of practice questions, with regular quality assessment and feedback during each learning cycle to support student progress.

The schemes of work and specification by nature outline some of parameters of subject content for AQA A Level Sociology. Paper 1 and paper 3 are compulsory papers with no choice in topic areas. However, we have sequenced the order in which we teach the units in a way which enables the students to build on their own experiences in order to access the curriculum. For example, the students begin by studying the Sociology of the Family and the Education System. We embed the teaching of theory and methods within these sociological topic areas. This gives the students a knowledge base that enables them to move more confidently from concrete to more abstract forms of analysis and evaluation. The more difficult and abstract topic areas such as 'beliefs' is taught in year 13, after the students have been able to develop their disciplinary understanding of the subject. Finally, we structure the course in a way that enables students to make synoptic links between different topic areas as the course progresses.

We structure the teaching in a way that corresponds to Vygotsky's concept of learning in the 'zone of proximal development'. In other words, we attempt to support students through scaffolding, modelling and enabling them to debate and discuss sociologically in lessons. This is an on-going development and we are constantly listening to student feedback to review the ways of assessing their progress and implementing the necessary support based on formative assessment. We also give students opportunities for self-assessment in order to help them identify their own areas of strength and weakness. We have developed the practice of giving students support in relation to note taking. So, for example, students are given writing frames to help them organise notes to ensure they have much better resources for revision.