



English
Mastery



Education
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Sheffield
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of Education



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Foundation
Research Trial 2023

Trial Information



Overview of the trial

In 2022–25, English Mastery is partnering with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) to evaluate the efficacy of our programme through a two-year, split cohort, independent randomised controlled trial.

The trial will assess the impact of English Mastery on student progress in English across Years 7 and 8. It will also consider how English Mastery can contribute to reducing teacher workload.

This is your opportunity to contribute to educational research. The findings will help fellow schools like yours make an informed choice when deciding which interventions improve student outcomes based on empirical evidence.

Two cohorts of schools will take part in the trial: cohort one is running from June 2022 – July 2024, and cohort two will run from September 2023 – July 2025.

The evaluation findings will be reported after cohort two have completed the trial in 2025.

About English Mastery

English Mastery is a programme from Ark Curriculum Plus, a non-profit organisation, dedicated to transforming education in the UK.

We aim to empower teachers to give every young person, regardless of their background, the subject knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed.

We believe that all students should graduate from secondary school with the academic and cultural literacy required to be educationally mobile, whatever their background. The bedrock of our approach is the belief that students should have the opportunity to study the knowledge, concepts and stories that have shaped the world. To achieve this, we provide partner schools with a knowledge-rich English curriculum, an integrated assessment model and a structured programme of subject-specific professional development.

Our initial pilot evaluation indicates that, on average, English Mastery students make four months' additional progress when compared to students not studying the programme.

In 2019, the EEF commissioned an efficacy trial to evaluate the impact of English Mastery. Findings from this trial – which was disrupted by Covid-19 – were published in Spring 2022. Some highlights include:

- 75% of teachers felt English Mastery improved students' overall progress
- 89% of teachers thought the Literary Heritage strand was quite or very effective
- 80% of teachers felt it reduced their planning and marking workload



How does the randomised controlled trial work?

The evaluation team will randomly allocate every school in the trial into one of two groups:



1. English Mastery intervention group

Half of the schools will be randomly selected to receive the English Mastery programme for two years. These schools will be offered a significantly reduced subscription fee of £900 per year – an 88% discount on the standard cost. In September 2023 intervention schools will receive training and teachers will start delivering the English Mastery curriculum to Year 7 students during their normal English lessons. The intervention will follow these students into Year 8 in September 2024. These students will sit a standardised English test, administered by SHU, in June 2025.

2. Control group

Half of the schools will be randomly allocated to the control group and will not receive the programme. They will be free to pursue whatever curriculum plans they choose. However, these control schools are essential to understanding the impact of the intervention and will receive £1,250 for completing all testing and data requirements. In June 2025, the Year 8 students in control schools will also sit a standardised English test, administered by SHU. Please note that control group schools will not be able to take part in English Mastery until after July 2025 when the trial concludes. At this point, the control school payment may be used towards the English Mastery programme when the trial is complete.

- Recruitment is open for cohort 2 until 8th September 2023. Schools will be notified of the group to which they have been assigned so that intervention schools can complete induction training in September 2023.
- Schools will be accepted on a first come, first served basis and places for the trial are limited.
- All schools must submit data (name, date of birth, UPN) on each pupil in the 2023/24 Y7 cohort as a condition of taking part. This will be used to access data on prior attainment, gender, FSM, EAL and SEND status from the National Pupil Database.



What will schools receive during the trial?

Should your school be randomly allocated to the English Mastery intervention group, you will receive our comprehensive programme rooted in the latest cognitive and educational research, developed by expert English teachers from across the country.

This includes:

1. Lesson plans and resources

English departments are given access to our learning platform, MyMastery, where all teachers can download lesson-by-lesson resources and units of work. The lessons introduce students to iconic characters that have shaped the literary canon and tricky grammatical concepts like the apostrophe and the comma splice.

2. Professional development

Teachers at every English Mastery school can attend up to six days of subject-specific professional development. This training supports departments and teachers to implement the programme successfully to ensure the curriculum has the best impact for their students.

3. Weekly co-planning materials

The departmental co-planning guidance and resources perfectly complement the lessons due to be delivered. The guidance helps teachers plan for mastery and adapt the English Mastery lessons based on the learning needs of the students in their own classrooms.

4. Specialist support

Teachers at every English Mastery school can attend up to six days of subject-specific professional development. This training supports departments and teachers to implement the programme successfully to ensure the curriculum has the best impact for their students.

5. A fully integrated assessment model

Teachers receive exemplar student scripts at every ability level for every English Mastery assessment. They also get the opportunity to attend our Assessing for Mastery training sessions to compare scripts with other schools, making benchmarking possible and accuracy achievable.



What will schools commit to do during the trial?

In return, for English Mastery to deliver the best outcomes for your students, we ask your school to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to comply with all evaluation requirements and, if randomised into the intervention group, all of the below:

1. Commit to participating in the two years of the trial.
2. Pay a subsidised programme fee of £900 in year 1 (2023-24) and again in year 2 (2024-25).
3. Deliver the English Mastery programme as intended, across all Year 7 classes in 2023-24 and all Year 8 classes in 2024-25.
 - a. Delivery must cover all three key components of the English Mastery curriculum – Literary Heritage, Writing Mastery, and Reading for Pleasure.
 - b. Schools will deliver a minimum of three hours a week of English.
4. Separate students into two ability pathways – Foundation or Traditional – based on their key stage two SATs score. Further guidance will be given to schools.
5. Nominate an SLT Champion to oversee the programme in your school.
6. Nominate an English Mastery Lead (EML) to lead the programme implementation in your school. The EML must teach the programme.
7. Release staff to fulfil the English Mastery training requirements.
 - a. All teachers delivering English Mastery and the SLT Champion are required to attend one day of mandatory induction training. This will be two mandatory days for the EML.
 - b. The EML must also attend the three termly Assessing for Mastery days.
 - c. Termly subject-specific professional development sessions will be available via online modules to all teachers delivering the programme and attendance is recommended.
8. Purchase the curriculum study texts needed for English Mastery.
9. Follow the English Mastery assessment model, ensuring students sit the termly end of unit assessments.
10. Timetable regular co-planning sessions for the department. One hour per week is recommended.
11. Host English Mastery support visits, which must always include a meeting with the SLT Champion.



Who can take part in this trial?

Recruitment is now open and places for the final window are strictly limited. The trial is open to any non-academically selective, state secondary school in England, who hasn't delivered English Mastery previously and has three or more hours of timetabled English lessons for Year 7 in 2023–24 and for Year 8 in 2024–25.

The timeline

Period	Actions
August / September 2023	Schools are recruited to take part in the trial.
	Schools have an introductory phone call with the English Mastery team and sign the trial's Memorandum of Understanding.
September 2023	Schools are informed of which group they are randomly assigned to by the evaluation team.
	Year 7 teachers and the SLT Champion from intervention group schools attend the English Mastery Induction training.
	All schools (intervention and control) provide the relevant student data (names, date of birth, unique pupil number, teacher/class) share parent information letters and complete a teacher survey. Control group schools receive £500 for providing all information required up to this point.
	The English Mastery programme launches in intervention schools and students experience their first English Mastery lesson. Control schools teach Year 7 under 'business-as-usual' conditions.
July 2024	Control schools receive a further £250 for providing all data required up to this point.
June 2025	Students in both intervention and control schools sit a standardised English test administered by SHU to capture progress and attainment. Control group schools receive a further £500 for ensuring all test and data requirements have been met.
Post-trial	All schools can subscribe to the English Mastery programme for September 2025.



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Interested in taking part?

Book a call with us at a
time that works for you.

[Book a call](#)

If you have any other questions, please contact us at partnerships@arkcurriculumplus.org.uk or call on 020 3116 6363.

