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Evaluating a mastery approach to teaching English in Key Stage 3

Submission date 05/04/2022	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[_] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol
Registration date 05/04/2022	**Overall study status** Completed	[_] Statistical analysis plan [X] Results
Last Edited 17/09/2026	**Condition category** Other	[_] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The aim of English Mastery is to improve achievement in the subject of English. This is done by providing teachers with subject-specific training, curriculum materials and ongoing in-school support and coaching.

Who can participate?
Key Stage 3 pupils (Years 7 and 8, ages 11-13 years).

What does the study involve?
EM is delivered through in-class teaching during regular timetabled English lessons. Weekly departmental co-planning materials are provided to aid teachers in adapting the English Mastery lessons for their pupils. Teachers also receive training and support through induction, additional training for the KS3 lead, remote development sessions, biannual school coaching visits, Assessing for Mastery standardisation sessions each term and optional webinar workshops. All pupils receive the same dosage and study the same topics, but the foundation curriculum is designed to be accessible to lower attaining pupils (such as through the use of abridged texts).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Pupils could benefit from higher attainment in English. The intervention is delivered in class and presents no conceivable additional risks.

Where is the study run from?
Sheffield Institute of Education (UK) is the independent evaluator. Ark Curriculum (UK) have designed the intervention and is responsible for the teacher training and ongoing support for schools.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
January 2022 to January 2026

Who is funding the study?
Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Martin Culliney, m.culliney@shu.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Evaluation of English mastery

Study objectives
The mastery approach to English leads to improved attainment among Key Stage 3 pupils as measured by the GL Assessment Progress Test in English

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 26/01/2022, Sheffield Hallam University ethics committee (no address provided; no telephone number provided; ethicssupport@shu.ac.uk), ref: ER40773698

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Two-arm three-level cluster randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
English teaching in schools

Interventions
Current intervention as of 21/07/2022:
The units of randomisation are schools.
Those allocated to the intervention group send their Y7 and Y8 English teachers to training provided by Ark English Mastery. These teachers then teach the relevant cohort (all Y7 pupils in 2022/23 and all Y8 pupils in 2023/24 for cohort 1, or all Y7 pupils in 2023/24 and all Y8 pupils in 2024/25 for cohort 2) using the English Mastery approach. Control schools teach on a 'business-as-usual' basis during this period.

Previous intervention:
The units of randomisation are schools.
Those allocated to the intervention group send their Y7 and Y8 English teachers to training provided by Ark English Mastery. These teachers then teach the relevant cohort (all Y7 pupils in 2022/23 and all Y8 pupils in 2023/24) using the English Mastery approach. Control schools teach on a 'business-as-usual' basis during this period.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Current primary outcome measure as of 21/07/2022:
Attainment in English, measured using KS2 Reading and GPS (combined) taken at end of Y6 (2022 for cohort 1, or 2023 for cohort 2) as a baseline and the GL Progress Test in English at end of Y8 (2024 for cohort 1, 2025 for cohort 2)

Previous primary outcome measure:
Attainment in English, measured using KS2 Reading and GPS (combined) taken at end of Y6 (2022) as a baseline and the GL Progress Test in English at end of Y8 (2024)

Key secondary outcome(s)
Current secondary outcome measures as of 21/07/2022:
Attainment in English, measured using KS2 Reading and GPS (separate) taken at end of Y6 (2022 for cohort 1, or 2023 for cohort 2) as a baseline and the GL Progress Test in English subscales (Reading; Spelling, punctuation and grammar) at end of Y8 (2024 for cohort 1, 2025 for cohort 2)

Previous secondary outcome measures:
Attainment in English, measured using KS2 Reading and GPS (separate) taken at end of Y6 (2022) as a baseline and the GL Progress Test in English subscales (Reading; Spelling, punctuation and grammar) at end of Y8 (2024)

Completion date
31/01/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Current participant inclusion criteria as of 21/07/2022:
1. Non-academically selective, state secondary schools

2. In the East Midlands and Humber, North or West Midlands regions of England
3. Not delivered English Mastery previously
4. Has three or more hours of timetabled English lessons for Year 7 in 2022-23 and for Year 8 in 2023-24 (cohort 1), or for Year 7 in 2023-24 and for Year 8 in 2024-25 (cohort 2)

Previous participant inclusion criteria:
1. Non-academically selective, state secondary schools
2. In the East Midlands and Humber, North or West Midlands regions of England
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Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
3780

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
01/03/2022

Date of final enrolment
30/09/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Sheffield Institute of Education
Arundel Building
Sheffield
England
S1 1AY

Sponsor information

Organisation
Education Endowment Foundation

ROR
https://ror.org/03bhd6288

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
Department for Education, UK Government

Alternative Name(s)
Department for Education (DfE), Department for Education, educationgovuk, DfE

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
At the end of the project, data on all participating pupils will be submitted to the EEF's Data Archive. At this point, EEF and DfE will be data controllers and contractors appointed to manage the Data Archive will be data processors. The evaluation data will also be linked with information about the students from the National Pupil Database (NPD), and shared with Department for Education, the EEF's archive manager and, in an anonymised form, with the Office for National Statistics, the UK Data Archive, and potentially other approved researchers.

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request, Stored in non-publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results		01/09/2026	17/09/2026	No	No
Protocol (other)			19/10/2022	No	No
Study website		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes