

Dear Parent/ Carer,

### RE: Evaluation of English Mastery Programme

I am writing to tell you that your child's school is participating in a study evaluating the English Mastery programme. English Mastery is a comprehensive programme which aims to improve English attainment for pupils in Years 7 and 8. The study is being funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Department for Education as part of the Accelerator Fund programme. The evaluation is being carried out by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU).

As part of this evaluation, half of the schools participating in the study will be randomly selected to follow the English Mastery curriculum in 2023-24 and 2024-25. The other half will continue with usual English teaching. SHU will conduct research to understand whether English Mastery improves students' progress in English.

To compare student's progress across the schools, SHU will conduct the following activities:

Research activity	Details
Collecting pupil data from schools	Schools will share pupil data (Unique Pupil Number, date of birth, first name and surname) with SHU via secure transfer. We collect this information so that we can record the student's progress from Key Stage 2 and to enable us to administer tests to students in KS3. Information on pupil characteristics (gender, Free Schools Meals, English as a Second Language and Special Educational Needs status) will also be obtained from NPD to help us understand how well the English Mastery Programme works for these pupils.
School visits and surveys	Teachers will complete surveys at two points during the evaluation. A SHU researcher will visit selected schools to interview teachers and observe English lessons. Names and personal details of students will not be recorded during these visits.
Student testing	At the end of Year 8 SHU will randomly select a group of pupils to participate in a standardised English test. Your child may be asked to sit this test. SHU will use the test scores to evaluate the impact of English Mastery on students' academic performance. The results will be analysed alongside data from the National Pupil Database to measure progress against prior attainment.

All personal data will be kept confidential and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (Article 6 (1e) and Article 9 (j)). Information provided will be shared securely with researchers at SHU. SHU will publish a report at the end of the evaluation. No individual pupils, teachers or schools will be mentioned in the report.

Please see the SHU Privacy Notice for research participants for more information about how your child's data will be treated: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research>

The DfE and EEF are joint data controllers who have overarching responsibility for the wider Accelerator Fund programme, which the English Mastery intervention is part of. They make decisions about how and what personal data is used in accordance with the purposes set by the DfE and EEF. SHU will act as independent data controller for the duration of the English

Mastery project. All personal information will be securely deleted once the project is completed. Once your child's information is archived it will be anonymised, and it will not be possible to identify them.

At the end of the project, data 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), 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.

If you would like more information about this project, you can contact the research team at SHU using the email address below, or visit the websites for EEF or English Mastery.

**SHU Email:** [EnglishMastery@shu.ac.uk](mailto:EnglishMastery@shu.ac.uk)

**EEF Website:** <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

**English Mastery:** <https://www.arkcurriculumplus.org.uk/our-programmes/secondary/english-mastery>

You have the right to express the wish for SHU not to obtain information about your child from the school, including their name, date of birth and Unique Pupil Number. If you do not want your child's school to share your child's information with the evaluators and wish for your child to opt-out of the project evaluation, please complete the slip on the following page. Please note that if you wish to opt your child out of the evaluation, they can still take part in the English Mastery lessons, but not the evaluation.

**If you are happy with everything in this letter you do not need to do anything.**

**Dr Martin Culliney**  
Senior Research Fellow  
Sheffield Hallam University

### English Mastery OPT-OUT SLIP

I do **not** want my child to take part in the evaluation of the English Mastery programme, including all the research activities described above:

Your child's name.....

Your full name.....

**Your signature**.....

**Date**.....

Please return this slip to your school within **two weeks** of receipt of this letter if you wish to **opt-out** of the English Mastery evaluation activities.