LeapStart Primary School Market Research

Executive Summary

August 2016

The Activity

iChild recruited 100 Primary Schools in England and Wales[1] to take part during July 2016 and two teachers from each primary school were required to test the device with their respective classes.

Each school received one LeapStart device with three sample books to test with the pupils in their classrooms.

Schools were required to fill in an online feedback form in return for the LeapStart bundles. Upon completion of the research survey, schools were allowed to keep their bundles for future use.

This report will cover:

1. Information on the participants who took part in the market research.
2. Overall response to the LeapStart device in the classroom from ease of use to supporting the National Curriculum.
3. LeapStart for special or additional needs based learning (e.g. autism or English as a second language).
4. Feedback on the hardware and books themselves.
5. Issues noted with the device or supporting library
6. Would participants recommend LeapStart?

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments from respondents, broken down by topic.

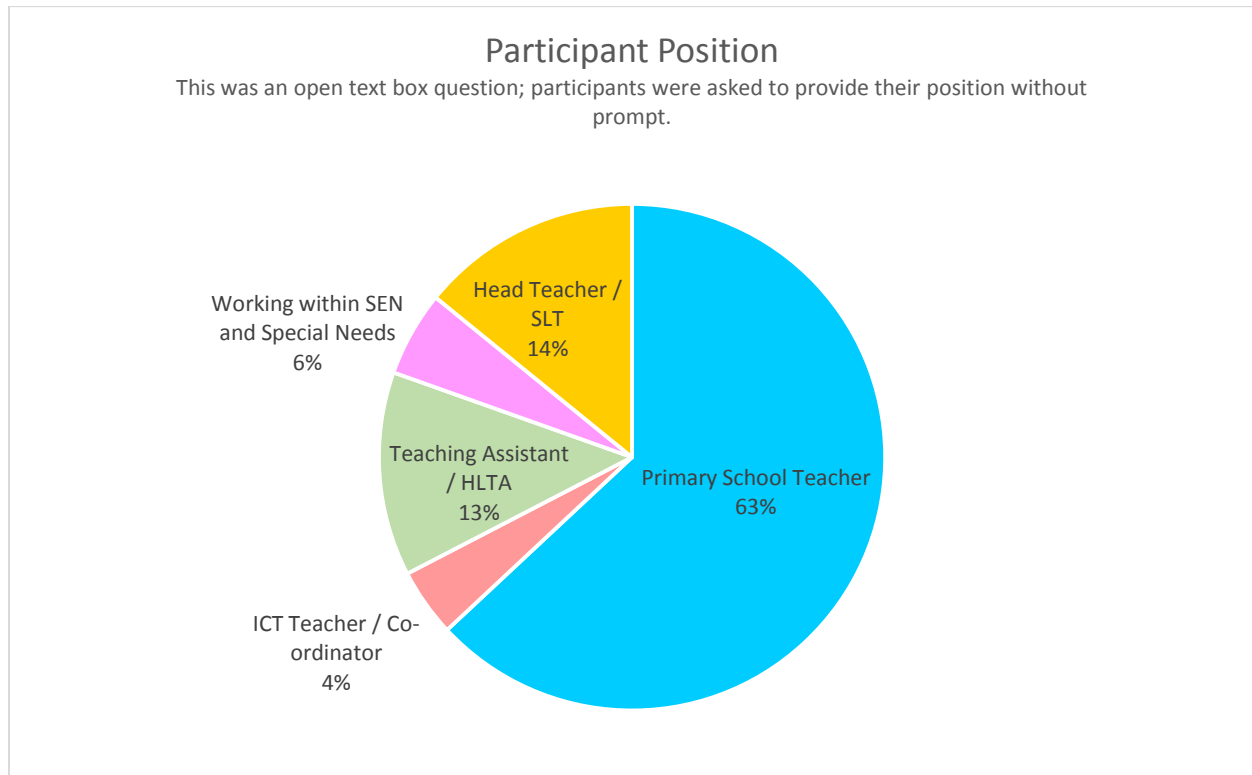NB: you can use the navigation on the left within Word to navigate around this document.

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[1] Scottish and Northern Irish schools were discounted from taking part in the campaign as schools in these nations finish for the summer break before the campaign took place.

1. Participant data

95% of participating schools were based in England, 5% in Wales.

Image 1: Participants' professional position within a school

Participant Position
This was an open text box question; participants were asked to provide their position without prompt.

- Head Teacher / SLT — 14%
- Working within SEN and Special Needs — 6%
- Teaching Assistant / HLTA — 13%
- ICT Teacher / Co-ordinator — 4%
- Primary School Teacher — 63%

17% of participants reported that they had not used talking books or other similar products in the classroom prior to this project.

Of these respondents who were new to interactive reading and writing devices for children, 100% said LeapStart was easy to use, 63% said it made a positive difference to pupils' learning and 90% said it supported the National Curriculum.

Furthermore, 100% said they would recommend the product to parents.

2. Overall Response to LeapStart in the classroom

Overall, the response to the LeapStart device and supporting library was positive with participants. Some teachers experienced issues when downloading the software for the books and some felt the product was too American (see Appendix for full list of comments on these issues), but the majority of teachers felt the device was very easy to use and supported learning in their classrooms.

➢ *"We have never used talking books before but the children were very involved and couldn't wait to use it. There was always a queue!"*
➢ *"A very fun activity that children want to return to again and again."*
➢ *"It has been a resounding success."*
➢ *"The children have thoroughly enjoyed using the device! Thank you."*
➢ *"We were very impressed and I look forward to using it more in the future."*
➢ *"Thank you for letting us trial it. It has been well received in the Early Years Unit."*
➢ *"A valuable teaching resource which helped support the traditional way of teaching!"*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments.

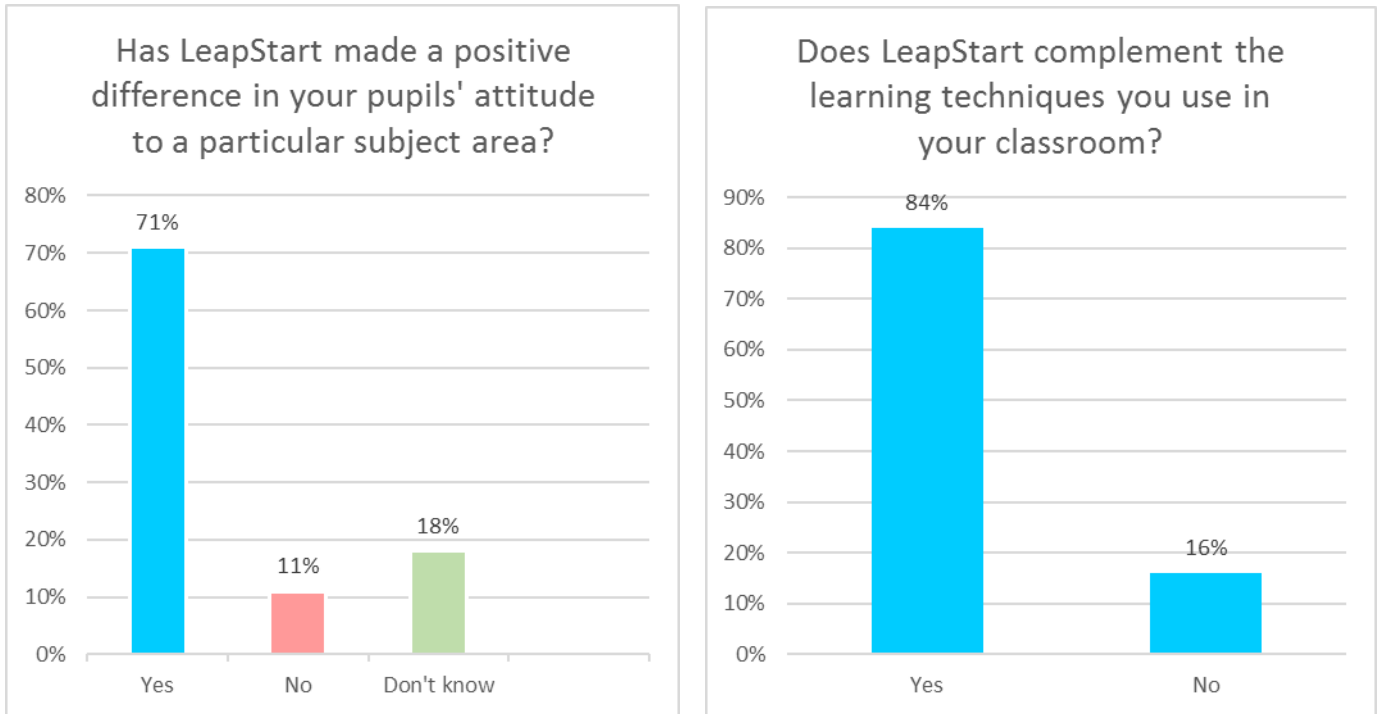*Image 2: How easy was LeapStart to use?*
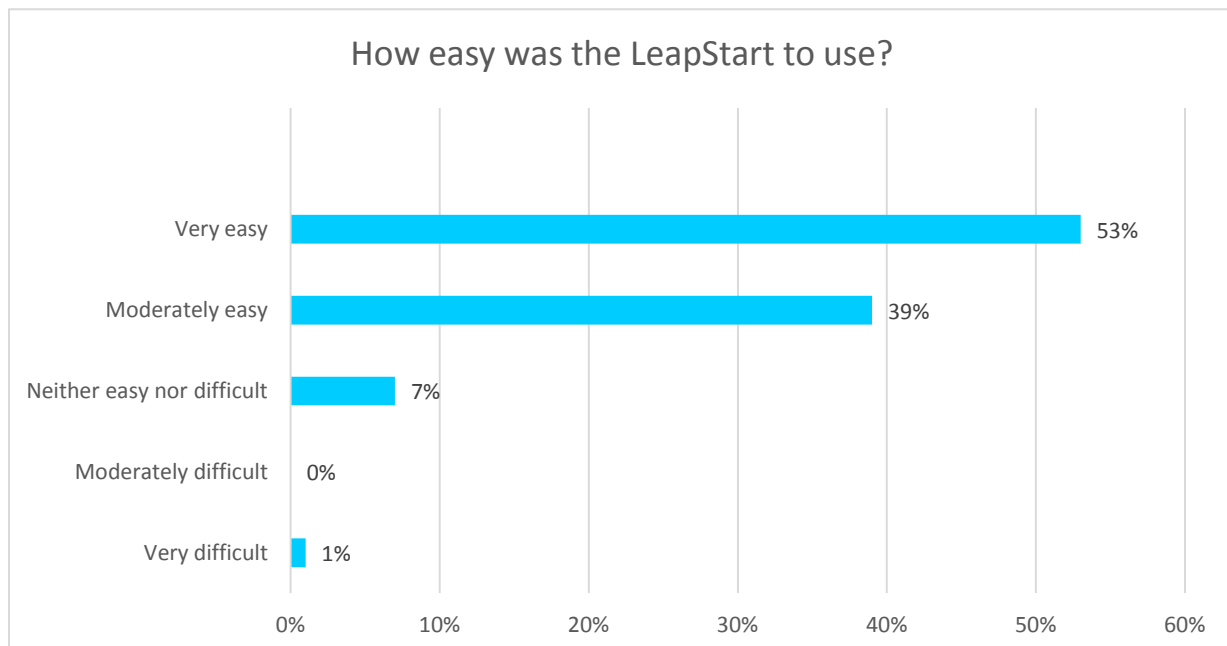
The one respondent who said the LeapStart was very difficult to use commented that the software was difficult to download and the installation kept crashing. LeapFrog was made aware of this issue by two other teachers who got in touch during the campaign to ask for assistance.

➢ *"The children have found this product very easy to use unlike others this needs slightest movements to make the sounds. The games and activities on each page are varied and well suited to a wide range of children's development."*

Has LeapStart made a positive difference in your pupils' attitude to a particular subject area?

- Yes: 71%
- No: 11%
- Don't know: 18%

Does LeapStart complement the learning techniques you use in your classroom?

- Yes: 84%
- No: 16%

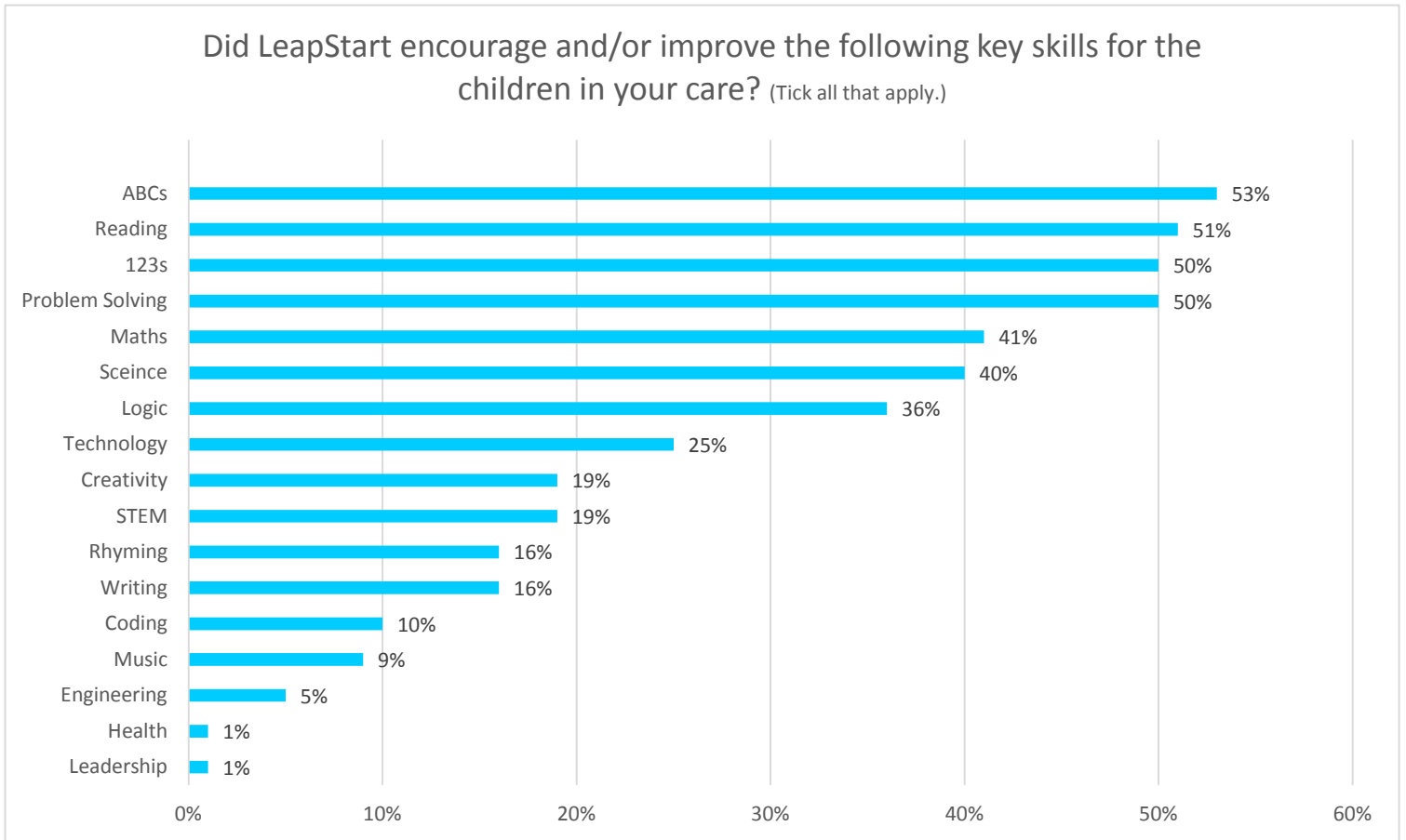**Why did 11% feel the LeapStart didn't make a positive difference to pupils' learning? (re: Image 3)**

40% participants within this 11% commented that they didn't think the LeapStart supported the National Curriculum. Similarly, 60% of this group felt it didn't support the learning techniques in their classroom. Finally, when asked if LeapStart had helped with any specific learning difficulties (SEN or otherwise), all but two of the participants in this group responded 'no'.

70% of this group would not recommend LeapStart to fellow teachers but 90% would recommend it for home learning with parents. It is plausible to suggest therefore that these teachers did not necessarily feel negative about the LeapStart device as Image 3 would suggest (in fact, most of them had very positive comments to share throughout their feedback – see below) but simply felt it had not necessarily significantly impacted the children's learning in a specific way.

> ➤ *"It's fun and interactive!"*
> ➤ *"A visually stimulating range of activities available for a range of ages."*
> ➤ *"It makes them listen and follow the instructions but gives them helpful support too."*

Did LeapStart encourage and/or improve the following key skills for the children in your care? (Tick all that apply.)

Skill	Percentage
ABCs	53%
Reading	51%
123s	50%
Problem Solving	50%
Maths	41%
Sceince	40%
Logic	36%
Technology	25%
Creativity	19%
STEM	19%
Rhyming	16%
Writing	16%
Coding	10%
Music	9%
Engineering	5%
Health	1%
Leadership	1%

Comments supporting the use of the device in classrooms:

➢ *"The device has supported children's development in early maths and English. It has reinforced scientific skills. It is easy to use for children with motor difficulties."*
➢ *"Kids' World Atlas was very popular with the Reception boys in class who were interested in flags and famous landmarks in the world. We have been studying this in class so it complemented our learning very well."*
➢ *"The road safety page was particularly useful as it's a subject not found often. We would have liked it to use 'English' words rather than American; for example, pavement rather than sidewalk and rubbish rather than garbage."*
➢ *"Really good, particularly like the animals, space and atlas themes as well as reading and maths books."*
➢ *"A very useful product, that engages the children in meaningful reading that helps broaden their knowledge."*
➢ *"Good for motor skills and listening skills."*
➢ *"The older children enjoyed learning new information in the atlas and space books and were keen to tell me all about the new facts they had learnt."*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments supporting the use of LeapStart in the classroom for developing key skills.

When asked how LeapStart specifically challenges pupils, a variety of responses were given ranging from encouraging problem solving to allowing children to progress at their own, individual pace due to the levels.

> *"The reading levels are challenging the children with their reading."*
> *"It encourages independent learning and for pupils to research specific topics to broaden their understanding to be able to progress."*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding how LeapStart challenges pupils.

The majority of respondents were incredibly positive with regards to LeapStart supporting the National Curriculum and teaching in the classroom:

Image 5: does LeapStart reflect the National Curriculum?
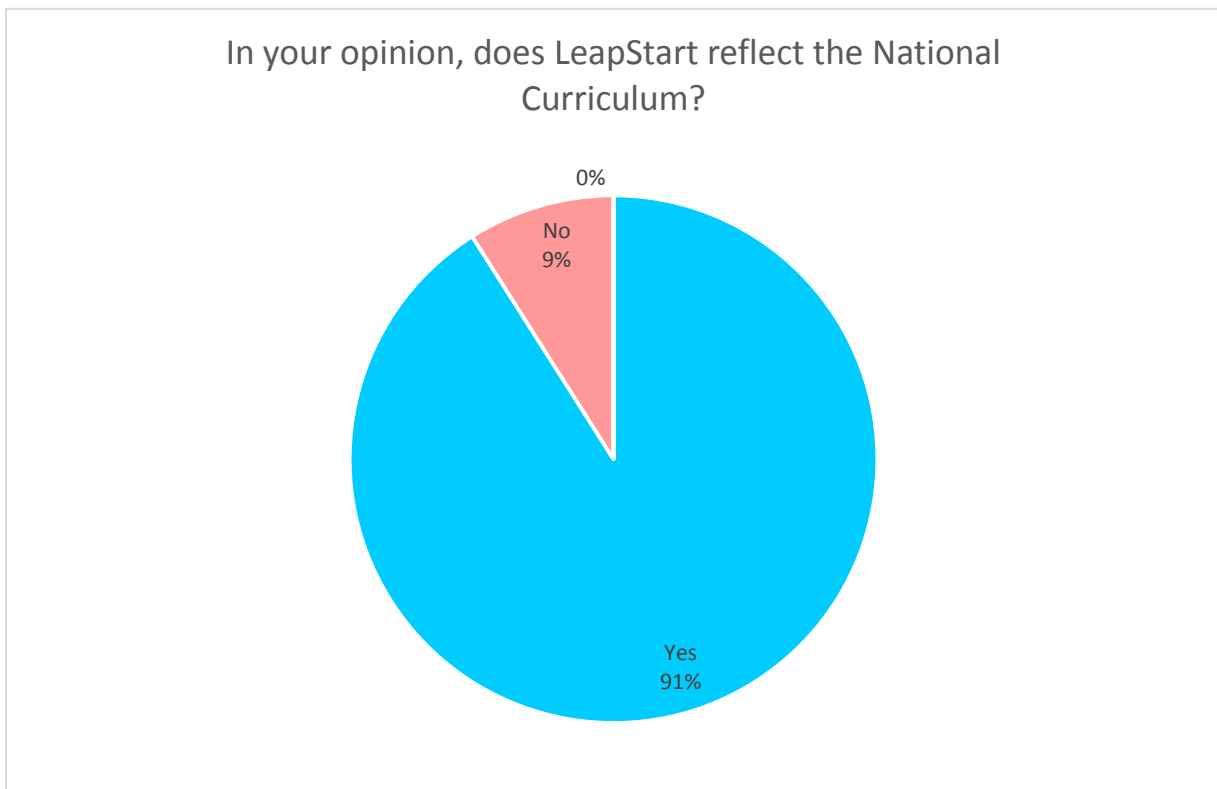
In your opinion, does LeapStart reflect the National Curriculum?

No 9%
0%
Yes 91%

> *"Clear curriculum links and quality texts."*
> *"There are lots of functions to use and the books cover many aspects of the National Curriculum."*
> *"There are different topics targeted at different age groups that supports areas within the curriculum and a pen that encourages the correct pen grip."*
> *"Due to the different functions available the students are learning through play and experimenting. They are advancing in not only their technology skills but also their learning in different areas of the curriculum. I'd definitely be interested in more level 3/4 books."*
> *"The books that are available are suited to the national curriculum coverage."*

> ➤ *"I think it is a balanced range, and hope that further books will become available in time to further support the curriculum in schools."*

Only two respondents noted negative aspects of the bundle with regards to the National Curriculum:
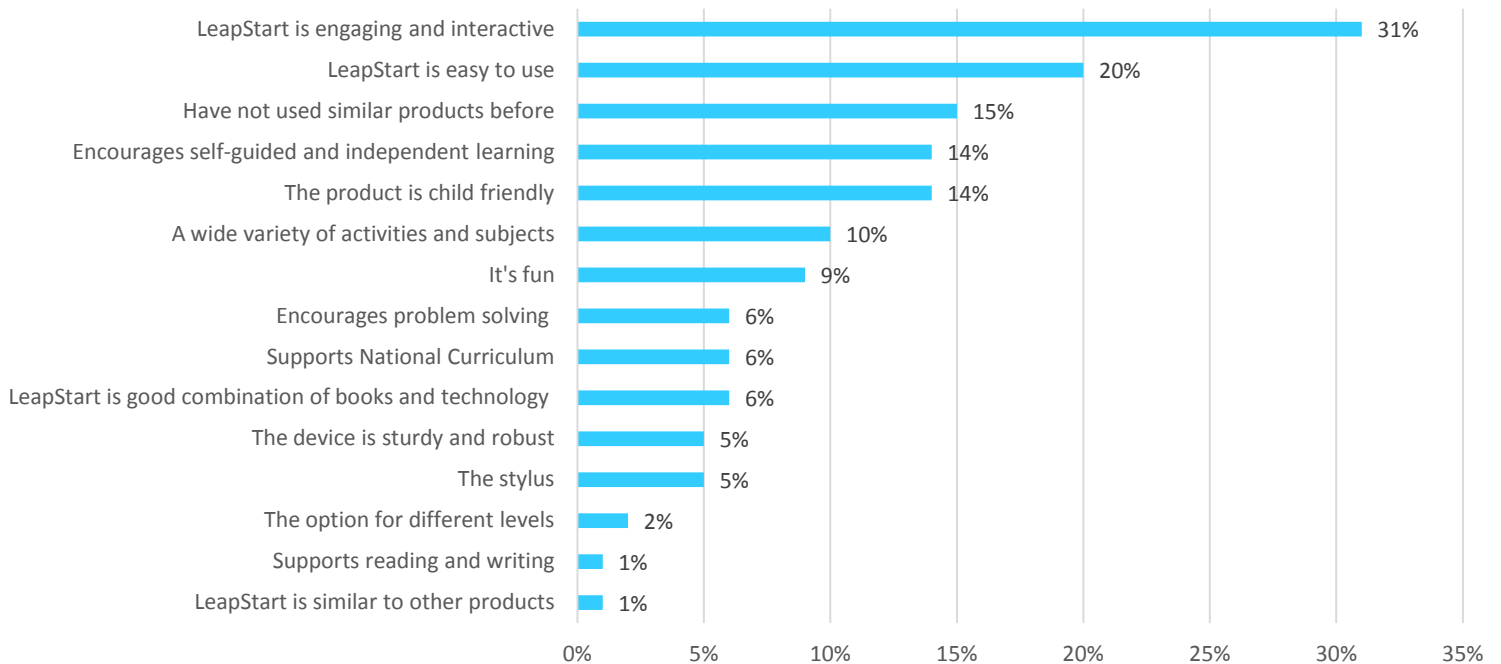
> ➤ *"Would be better if the book followed on in order of the National Curriculum."*
> ➤ *"In the maths book I really like the use of tens frames but it would be even better with the use of other models and images to represent numbers such as tally, dice faces, mum on tiles, beads strings, bar models, cherry models. You had in the maths interactive section a select which is not a correct question that would support the maths reasoning element of the curriculum."*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding LeapStart and the National Curriculum.

Image 6: how does LeapStart fair against other devices in the market?

What is it about LeapStart that makes it different from other products or talking books that you've used?

NB: this was an open text box question and the results below have been compiled from individual responses

- LeapStart is engaging and interactive — 31%
- LeapStart is easy to use — 20%
- Have not used similar products before — 15%
- Encourages self-guided and independent learning — 14%
- The product is child friendly — 14%
- A wide variety of activities and subjects — 10%
- It's fun — 9%
- Encourages problem solving — 6%
- Supports National Curriculum — 6%
- LeapStart is good combination of books and technology — 6%
- The device is sturdy and robust — 5%
- The stylus — 5%
- The option for different levels — 2%
- Supports reading and writing — 1%
- LeapStart is similar to other products — 1%

A few anecdotal responses that echoed many of the respondents' thoughts were;

> ➤ *"Pupils build on previous knowledge and use problem solving skills on each level."*
> ➤ *"It gives them harder questions when they have answered easier ones correctly. The children want to get on to the next page so think carefully about what they are doing in order to get it correct. It also makes them think more mentally."*
> ➤ *"Children need to explore a range of areas in the subject independently. Encourages children to think and discuss ideas with peers. It explains new concepts and expands their understanding of different subjects."*

- *"The stylus being like a pencil to hold encourages pencil control and strengthens the hand for writing."*
- *"Makes them listen carefully to instructions and then follow them. They need to use their observation skills, and are scanning and skimming all the time, building up these excellent skills needed for reading."*
- *"Challenges their knowledge and understanding, logical thinking, problem solving, turn taking skills!"*

Those who had not used similar devices before;

- *"It is very child friendly. There are lots of activities to choose from. When you present them with it to use they can also see that it is made for a child to use so boosting their self esteem that they can do this."*
- *"I have not used talking books before. With Leapfrog I like the way it encourages the child to stop and think in their problem solving, rather than climb as many levels as they can. The use of a stylus rather than touch screen is a refreshing change, increasing their fine motor and co-ordination skills in the early years."*
- *"They are straightforward for the children to use and fun and enjoyable. They make clear links to the national curriculum and allow children a different way to access their learning."*

3. Special or Additional Needs

6% of respondents specified that they worked within a Special Needs classroom daily, either as a Teaching Assistant in a special needs environment or as a SENCo.

However, 42% of respondents noted specifically how the LeapStart bundle had helped the learning of pupils in their classroom with special or additional needs in their schools. These included;

- Autism
- ADHD
- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome
- Dyslexia
- English as a Second Language
- Lower Ability Pupils and Reluctant Readers
- Poor Fine Motor Skills
- Speech Therapy

The bundle performed extremely well within this demographic.

➢ *"My class is in a special needs school and they all love using technology. It helps to keep them focused on one-to-one activity or to learn to share with another child."*
➢ *"A child with learning difficulties used the program alongside his peers."*
➢ *"It helped with the children who had fine- motor difficulties - encouraged the children to persevere."*
➢ *"ADHD pupils have been able to get an immediate response so has been able to support them in activities of work, but a fun element to keep them focused, very quick to help ease anxiety"*
➢ *"Child with Cerebral Palsy found it easy to interact with and navigate around."*
➢ *"It has been used with children with a range of needs well, although most widely to consolidate learning for a child with Down Syndrome who is working significantly below her peers."*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding LeapStart and SEN and Additional needs based learning.

4. LeapStart hardware and library

LeapStart Interactive Guidance

80% of respondents said that pupils found the LeapStart and its interactive guidance easy to use.

Of the 20% who reported difficulties, half of these were due to issues with the volume being too quiet for a busy classroom environment or problems with the American accent and/or vocabulary used on the LeapStart device. A minority said that problems downloading the software on school computers (e.g. due to a firewall) meant it wasn't as easy to use as they had hoped.

It was also usually the younger children (e.g. Reception classes) that needed more adult help to use the device. However, many of these noted that after a few uses with an adult, the children were able to use LeapStart independently once they had got to grips with it.

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding the Interactive Guidance System.
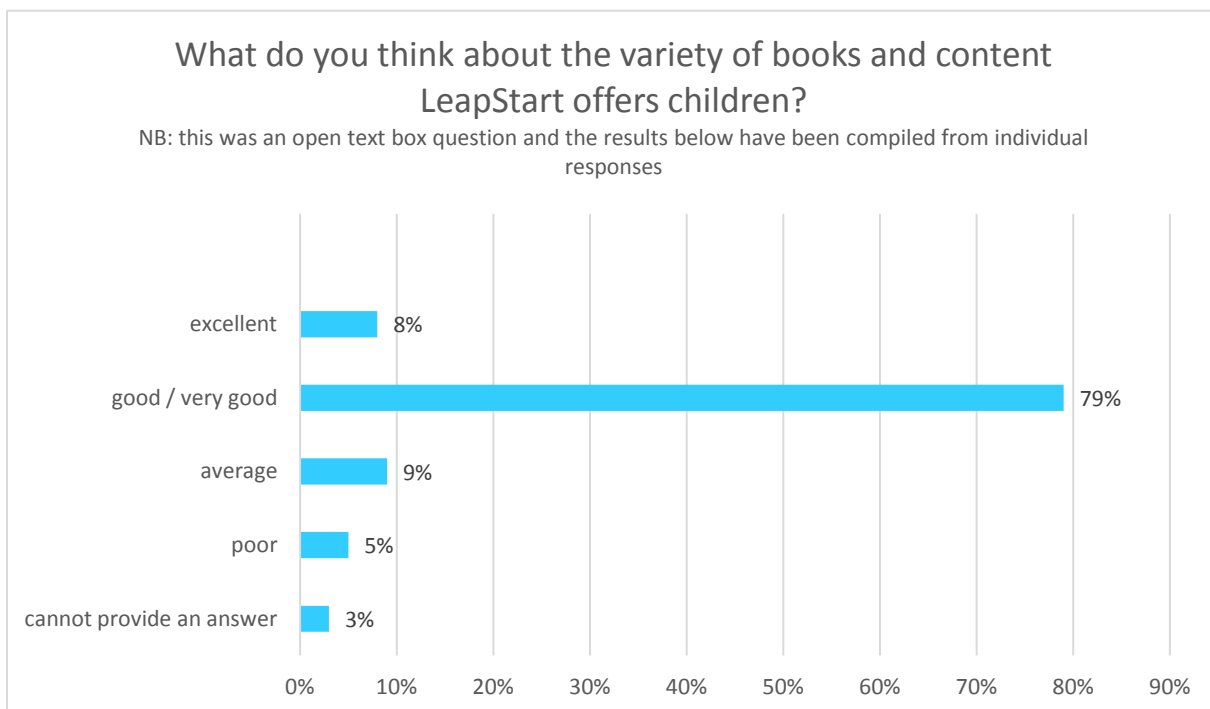
LeapStart library

Image 7: feedback regarding the LeapStart library

79% of respondents felt the variety of LeapStart books and content were 'good'[2]. 51% of respondents cited the 'huge variety' available.

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[2] As this was an open text box question, the statistics for this section of the report have been devised by sorting the anecdotal answers into the five options in the chart above. *Good* was compiled from a variety of answers

> ➢ *"There is a huge variety available on a range of topics, this means that you can find something for every child."*
> ➢ *"There is a varied amount of resources suitable for children of different ages, we will be purchasing some more pre-school ones for our room."*
> ➢ *"There is such an engaging range. I am really impressed with the range and looking forward to using it further with my SEN learners. I must add that my older students didn't find it too babyish so I really like this product."*
> ➢ *"The variety of books was amazing especially the world one. It linked in well with what we were studying for global awareness across a number of year groups."*

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding the LeapStart library and content.

Only 3% felt they had not received a wide enough selection of books to provide an educated opinion on this subject. Many of the 9% who felt the library was average based their decision on the three books they had been provided with in their bundle rather than the library as a whole. For instance, they noted 'only three books' or 'a small selection of books to test', thus suggesting that these responses were based on the sample selection rather than the library as a whole.

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including, 'good,' 'really good' or 'very good'. *Excellent* was compiled of comments using adjectives such as 'great,' 'amazing,' or 'excellent.'

5. Issues flagged throughout the research

Please see the Appendix for a full list of comments regarding the issues outlined below.

Too American

Throughout the feedback, the fact the device is very American was continuously flagged by participants.

19% of participants noted the American accent used on the device as problematic in the classroom, either because of differing vocabulary (e.g. 'sidewalk' instead of 'pavement') or pronunciation differences (e.g. 'zee' instead of 'zed' when learning the alphabet).

When asked specifically about the quality of the books, 5% of participants noted Americanisms in the language used within the books being a problem.

Problematic Software Download

10% of participants experienced issues downloading the software for the books on school computers. It is likely this is due to a firewall on the school network and unfortunately delayed some schools in taking part in the research, as well as causing frustration for the pupils who were eager to get started.

Volume is too quiet for a classroom environment

13% of respondents noted that the volume on the device was too quiet for a classroom environment. This was solved in most cases by wearing headphones, however, this meant only one child could use the device at a time, meaning they could not use team work and further their social skills by using the device.

Use of upper case letters for ABCs

14% of respondents noted that children learn the alphabet using lower case letters rather than upper case as used in the LeapStart books. They felt it would better reflect the National Curriculum if they used lower case letters, but also be less confusing for the children.

Books easily marked by the stylus

5% noted that the stylus marked the books after repeated usage, meaning in a busy classroom setting, they quickly became worn and damaged.

6. Recommendation

Despite some issues noted with LeapStart in the classroom setting, 80% of participants would recommend the device to other teachers and 97% would recommend it to parents to support learning at home.

Image 8: Likelihood to recommend LeapStart
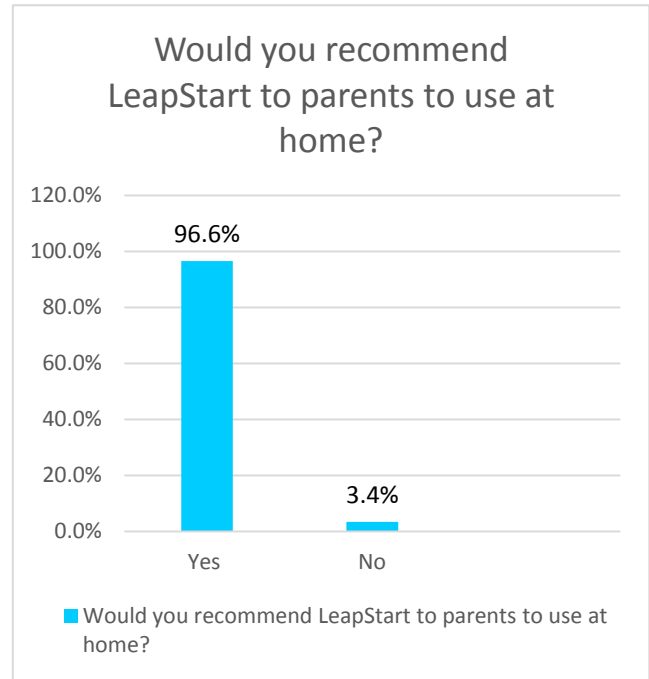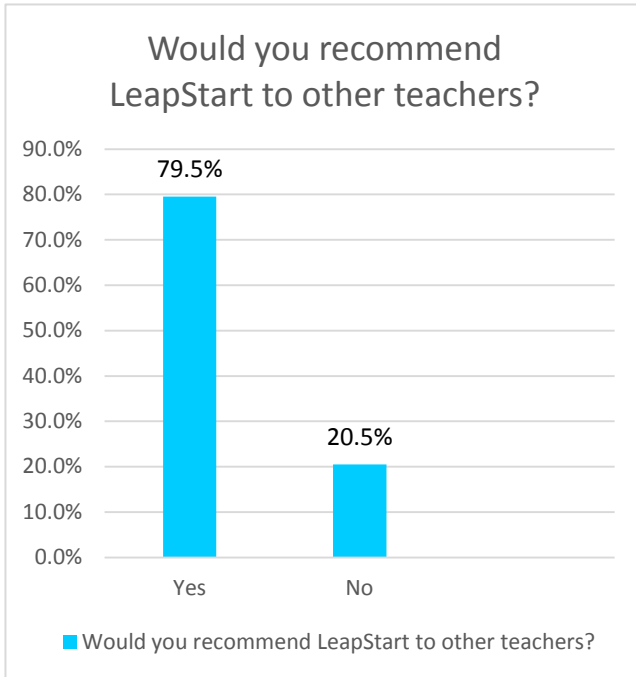
> ➤ *"A useful resource no hesitation to recommend."*
> ➤ *"Would definitely recommend to others."*
> ➤ *"A great device which I would recommend."*
> ➤ *"It would work well at home as a learning device but as I'm unsure of the price I am unsure I would recommend it."*
> ➤ *"These resources are good, but I feel that it would be best used for home learning. The reason behind this is that our children have been so used to tablets to enhance their learning within class, that they lost interest in using the LeapStart."*

Following these extremely positive results, we are very happy to award LeapStart and the supporting library the iChild Recommends badge.[3]

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[3] To be eligible for the iChild Recommends stamp of approval, a product must achieve 70% or higher among respondents when asked if they would recommend this product. The badge is valid for use by LeapFrog for twelve months after the market research is carried out.

Appendix: Comments by topic

2. Overall Response to LeapStart in the classroom

General Comments

➢ *There is such an engaging range. I am really impressed with the range and looking forward to using it further with my SEN learners. I must add that my older students didn't find it too babyish so I really like this product.*

➢ *The children have enjoyed using this device thank you.*

➢ *Loved having the device to give the children other opportunities for learning.*

➢ *A very fun activity that children want to return to again and again.*

➢ *It has been a resounding success.*

➢ *My children have thoroughly enjoyed using the device! Thank you.*

➢ *We were very impressed an I look forward to using it more in the future.*

➢ *Thank you for letting us trial it. It has been well received in the Early Years Unit.*

➢ It was easy to navigate. Very interactive, well made and the children loved it.

Easy to use

➢ *It was easy to use and activities stimulated the children.*

➢ *It's very child friendly and is easy to use. The books are interesting for the children and engage them.*

➢ *It's attractive, appealing and easy to use.*

➢ *The children have found this product very easy to use unlike others this needs slightest movements to make the sounds.*

➢ *It's easy to use and compact, giving good learning opportunities*

➢ *I've not used many others. It was so easy to use with nursery pupils.*

➢ *The children found it very easy to use, working together taking turns answering questions and solving problems. children were able to use this unaided unlike other things we have in the room.*

➢ *It's very easy to use and gives the children feedback.*

➢ *Children found it easy to use and enjoyed learning with the tool.*

➢ *The children did find it easy to use, although they struggled to hear the instructions over the background noise of the busy classroom.*

➢ *Very accessible to the children and easy to use.*

➢ *They did find it easy to use once they were shown how to*

➢ *I thought it was well pitched, and the children found it easy to use.*

LeapStart and the National Curriculum

➢ *The books that are available are suited to the national curriculum coverage.*

➢ *I think it is a balanced range, and hope that further books will become available in time to further support the curriculum in schools.*

➢ *There are different topics targeted at different age groups that supports areas within the curriculum and a pen that encourages the correct pen grip.*

➢ *They are straightforward for the children to use and fun and enjoyable. They make clear links to the national curriculum and allow children a different way to access their learning.*

➢ *It has detachable books and is interactive and supports many areas of the National Curriculum.*

➢ *Clear curriculum links and quality texts*

➢ *There are lots of functions to use and the books cover many aspects of the National Curriculum.*

➢ *Would be better if the book followed on in order of the National Curriculum.*

➢ *In the maths interactive section, if you had a selection which was not correct that would support the maths reasoning element of the curriculum color, schedule is pronounced differently and we say pavement for side walk.*

Developing Key Skills

➢ *Asking lots of questions which forces them to use a range of skills. For example listening, reading and using inference skills.*

➢ *Keen to engage and solve the problems. Great that it has 2 levels of challenge on each page. They loved the sticker rewards in the stem book.*

➢ *Makes them listen carefully to instructions and then follow them. They need to use their observation skills, and are scanning and skimming all the time, building up these excellent skills needed for reading.*

➢ *It encouraged the children to ask and answer specific questions.*

➢ *Developing confidence with technology and listening skills.*

Concentration and maintaining engagement

➢ *Helped a few with concentration issues.*

➢ *Helpful in development of attention for some children.*

➢ *Helped* with motivation and engagement.

Fine Motor Skills and Pencil Grip

➢ *The interactive pen was great, and helped with developing the children's pencil grip.*

➢ *The stylus offers an alternative to swipe gestures associated with tablets. The use of the stylus also helps with developing use of a pen and pen grips.*

- *It has helped with pencil grip.*

- *It is easy to use for children with motor difficulties.*

- *The use of a stylus rather than touch screen is a refreshing change, increasing their fine motor and co-ordination skills in the early years.*

- *Has helped with developing fine motor skills.*

- *The stylus being like a pencil to hold encourages pencil control and strengthens the hand for writing.*

- *Children with poor fine motor skills loved it.*
- *The size of the stylus was great for children with poor pencil control.*
- *It helped with the children who had fine- motor difficulties - encouraged the children to persevere.*
- *It is easy to use for children with motor difficulties.*
- *The interactive pen was great, and helped with developing the children's pencil grip.*

Independent Learning

- *It encourages independent learning and for pupils to research specific topics to broaden their understanding to be able to progress.*

Listening

- *The LeapStart really helped with listening Skills and Concentration.*

- *It makes them listen and follow the instructions but gives them helpful support too.*

- *They had to listen carefully to understand the instructions.*

Problem Solving

- *Helpful for the use of problem solving.*

- *I like the way it encourages the child to stop and think in their problem solving, rather than climb as many levels as they can.*

Social Skills

- *Social skills - children having to work out for themselves how to take turns!*

- *The children found it very easy to use, working together taking turns answering questions and solving problems. children were able to use this unaided unlike other things we have in the room*

Challenging pupils

- *Makes them think before they answer.*

- *It gives them harder questions when they have answered easier ones correctly. The children want to get on to the next page so think carefully about what they are doing in order to get it correct. It also makes them think more mentally.*

➢ *They have to use their listening and attention skills more to follow the verbal instructions, rather than tapping excessively and trying to race through the activity.*

➢ *Asking specific questions.*

➢ *It allows them to explore independently so they must work it out themselves.*

➢ *The challenge questions are progressive, so enables children to stretch their knowledge.*

➢ *Gives them options to go onto harder levels.*

➢ *Children need to explore a range of areas in the subject independently. Encourages children to think and discuss ideas with peers. It explains new concepts and expands their understanding of different subjects.*

➢ *It enables them to do develop logic, use their initiative and problem solve.*

Support for the different levels

➢ *I like the different levels and the skills page at the front. The children can work through at their own pace and the audio is geared to specific vocabulary linked to the abilities.*

➢ *Differing levels allow you to step up or down, depending on ability.*

➢ *Each child moves at their own levels so no pressure.*

➢ *Gives them options to go onto harder levels.*

➢ *The different levels mean you can choose material to suit a child's specific ability.*

➢ *There are a range of levelled books each with their own learning and activities so they can be pitched well to match the needs of the child.*

➢ *The higher "levels" proved challenging to some of our younger pupils, but it encouraged both questions and collaborative work to overcome it.*

3. SEN and Additional Needs

➢ *My class is in a special needs school and they all love using technology. It helps to keep them focused on one-to-one activity or to learn to share with another child.*
➢ *A child with learning difficulties used the program alongside his peers.*
➢ *A very wide level of SEN and there was a good mixture of activities.*
➢ *Very helpful for SEN language development.*
➢ *Great for engaging SEND children.*
➢ *My class have special needs and most could manage it themselves.*

Autism

➢ *Thank you very much for the opportunity for using the product. One little boy with autism particularly enjoyed the product.*
➢ *Great for keeping a child with Autism focused.*

- ➤ *Autistic children were keen to use the device and stay focused on the tasks.*
- ➤ *A child with Autism used it with headphones with it too.*

ADHD

- ➤ *Children with ADHD who struggle to concentrate for long periods of time in the normal classroom setting.*
- ➤ *A child with ADHD was able to concentrate on a book for 5-10 minutes independently, which he generally finds difficult to do.*
- ➤ *ADHD pupils have been able to get an immediate response so has been able to support them in activities of work, but a fun element to keep them focused, very quick to help ease anxiety*

Cerebral Palsy

- ➤ *Child with Cerebral Palsy found it easy to interact with and navigate around.*

Down Syndrome

- ➤ *It has been used with children with a range of needs well, although most widely to consolidate learning for a child with Down Syndrome who is working significantly below her peers.*
- ➤ *The use of a stylus style chunky pen makes it easy to use for an SEN child with Down Syndrome who has motor co-ordination difficulties, other touch based products can be overly sensitive or under sensitive which has caused frustration.*

Dyslexic

- ➤ *The colourful backgrounds and clearness of the product have supported our dyslexic friendly school.*

English as a Second Language

- ➤ *It increased the speaking and listening skills of children, especially children who have English as an additional language, or have had limited exposure to key vocabulary at home."*
- ➤ *Great for EAL language development.*
- ➤ *Supported understanding of topics for EAL pupils.*
- ➤ *They had to follow simple instructions, which for EAL children and SEN children was good practice for communication and language development.*

Lower Ability Pupils and Reluctant Readers

- ➤ *As I work with lower ability children they tend to use the preschool books more but the joy on their faces when they are correctly answering is just lovely to see. They do eventually move on to the next stage of books.*
- ➤ *It has helped with the lower ability children to learn the basics such as recognising numbers and counting to ten, colours, alphabet and naming different animals etc   It has also helped in one to one speech and language sessions.*
- ➤ *We have a very active child who took an interest in this equipment.*
- ➤ *For my less able children they liked the fact the questions were read aloud so they could access the activities rather than finding it hard to read the questions.*
- ➤ *It helped us engage some older, low ability pupils.*

- *We tended to use it mostly with our lower achievers and reluctant readers as the interactive nature really appealed to them.*
- *It encouraged reluctant learners to have a go.*
- *New subject matters and engaging some children who would not usually sit for very long and concentrate.*
- *The device was highly motivating and children enjoyed using it regardless of their normal attitude towards books and reading.*
- *I feel it will impact on my reluctant readers, especially boys.*
- *Reluctant readers wanted to explore.*
- *Great for reluctant readers, children who struggle to engage with their learning*
- *It has helped to engage less able children as an alternative to resources we have previously tried - ICT always helps them to apply skills as they see it as playing a game/with a toy and not work related.*
- *The interactive element has helped engage students with short attention spans.*

Speech Therapy

- *The LeapStart was particularly helpful for speech therapy with 2 pupils.*
- *The sound element has supported students with speech, language and communication needs. We like how the sound is nice and clear.*

4. LeapStart Hardware and Library

Hardware feedback
- *A magnetic click for the handle would help younger children when they carry the leap pad around.*
- Perhaps a hinge to lock it as the children kept dropping a handle and it came open, so tricky to carry around.
- *The power button is easy for little fingers to press when in the middle of an activity which is frustrating.*

The wand

- *The wand is not user friendly for left handers.*
- *The wand lead is very short and can make it difficult to access aspects of book especially if left handed. The end of the wand is v sharp marking the pages with large Indents.*
- *At times they found that the pen being attached was not always helpful to their manipulation or the way they held it.*
- *The pen was easy to hold especially for children with fine motor difficulties.*
- *The use of a stylus rather than touch screen is a refreshing change, increasing their fine motor and co-ordination skills in the early years.*

Interactive guidance

➢ *It was easy to use, children listened well and followed the guidance*

➢ *The interactive learning available really sets this apart from other talking books we've used.*

➢ *Pupils love the interactive element, seems more like a game. Far more modern than a book. Nice to have something that appeals to the younger children.*

➢ *It's much more fun and interactive!*

➢ *The interactive guidance is fairly straightforward and easy to follow, even for the children.*

➢ *Reception children initially still needed support but then were fine.*

➢ *I found the interactive guidance useful, makes the product easier and quicker to understand.*

➢ *Children were able to access the books without adult help after being shown how to use the LeapStart. This meant that children used the LeapStart independently as part of their child initiated learning time. They were keen to use the LeapStart showing that it had kept their interest over a sustained period of time.*

➢ *Yes the guidance was clear and easy for the children to follow.*

➢ *Yes it was clear and fairly pacey so the children didn't get bored waiting for the next steps. They seem became familiar with the star, light bulb and hand code and could apply this to use on the other books.*

➢ *I think the expectations of the activities was particularly high for the age range of children and this would not necessarily be beneficial to all children.*

Instructions were generally easy to follow and use but for some children - there was a lot of verbal instructions with multiple steps that they found difficult and needed an adult to repeat in simpler terms.

➢ *Clear but had to be used in a quiet environment so children could easily follow guidance.*

➢ *The children found it hard to wait for the instructions and the comments in between each time they had to click.*

➢ *In a quiet environment yes, in a busy classroom it was much more difficult. As we expect children to access activities independently, this was at times challenging.*

Books and content feedback

➢ *Would be better if the book followed on in order of the National Curriculum.*

➢ *Some books specifically designed for speech and language issues would be brilliant.*

➢ *For younger children the questions are games could be more directed/specific.*

➢ *The maths book I really like the use of tens frames but it would be even better with the use of other models and images to represents numbers such as tally, dice faces, mum on tiles, beads strings, bar models, cherry models. If you had in the maths interactive section a select which is not correct question that would support the maths reasoning element of the curriculum*

➢ *Would be good to have different versions of books to match handwriting styles, i.e straight 4*

➢ *On the base unit, when you press on the "fractions", it says "one fourth" rather than "one quarter" etc. Is this something that can be addressed? As a teaching professional, I would never refer to it as a "fourth" or "three fourths".*

➢ *The content in the books was not always appropriate for lower ability pupils in my class. The pupils would not be able to access the books independently.*

➢ *We have only seen a small sample. Quite good but with more of a teacher input in the designing it could match classroom delivery better*

➢ *They feel rather commercialized to me; I would prefer texts to be more stand-alone and not rely on familiarity with characters and settings from other media.*

5. Issues flagged throughout the research

Too American

➢ *The American accent confused some children especially on how some of the sounds see pronounced. An English voice would be nice and more familiar for younger children.*

➢ *A Few American phrases need to be adapted to UK but overall really good product.*
➢ *I did not like the American accent as it pronounced things incorrectly.*
➢ *The American accent is off putting especially for phonics. It really should be English for an English market as we do not always spell or pronounce words the same e.g colour is spelt as color, schedule is produced differently and we say pavement for side walk.*

➢ *Some children struggled to follow the instructions because of the accents and objects used.*

➢ *It would be good if it was set to a default dialect according to where it is purchased. The children said that they found the American accent a little hard to understand.*
➢ *Could the accent be changed?*

➢ *Would like to choose voice.*

➢ *It was too American. Some of the items were referred to in American terms and our children struggled to know what it was.*

➢ *At times they found the American accent a little hard to understand as some of the pronunciation was slightly different to how we pronounce certain sounds in English.*

➢ *Don't like the American voice.*

➢ *Excellent selection of books, although some American wording on the animal pages.*

➢ *I wasn't sure about the American tone to some of the voices but the children didn't mind at all or find it difficult to follow.*

➢ *the American accent is not helpful or appropriate in English phonics*

➢ *Shame about the American accent.*

- ➢ We thought that the LeapStart was very Americanised.

- ➢ *It was too American. Some of the items were referred to in American terms and our children struggled to know what it was.*

- ➢ We would of liked it to use 'English' words rather than American; for example pavement rather than sidewalk and rubbish rather than garbage.

Problematic Software Download

- ➢ *Had issue with download of software/books in school which may be down to filtering in schools. Might be worth investigating and providing more detailed error codes when it fails. I just got, 'can not update' or similar. At home was fine.*

- ➢ *Clear but had to be used in a quiet environment so children could easily follow guidance*

- ➢ *Bit tricky to download on the school network- had to install it at home.*

- ➢ *I could not get the device to install. The demo looked promising and the children were excited to use it but unfortunately the update never completed and it kept crashing.*

- ➢ *We did have difficulty accessing / downloading from the website*

- ➢ *loading the books took ages as errors kept coming up and the installation process kept failing. After trying about 8 times the process completed accurately and I managed to upload the books to the system.*

- ➢ *Some struggled to hear clearly but most were able to use it independently*

- ➢ *a bit fiddly to install initially as computer did not always find device / install book straight away.*

- ➢ *It's just a shame we couldn't get them to work on our school system (the LeapStart software for computers.)*

- ➢ *We couldn't get any of the additional books to work*

- ➢ *I could not get our LeapStart to work. The installation kept crashing.*

Volume is too quiet

- ➢ *Volume! The LeapStart is too quiet for a busy, often noisy classroom environment. I did find that the volume was better when using headphones and so this is what we did. It did mean though that only one child could access it at a time. We have a child with moderate hearing difficulties and she was unable to access the LeapStart at all. Could the volume be increased when using the LeapStart without the headphone facility?*

- ➢ *Fairly easy to use but too quiet in a busy classroom.*

- ➢ *The children enjoyed working together on the book so the position of the speaker was a problem for children, and the volume seemed low, if we were not using headphones. The children had to lean more to the left to hear the instructions. Could the speaker be in the middle more or the volume be increased?*

- *In a noisy classroom the pens and the leap start book could be louder. If you use head phones then only one child can use the book at a time.*

- *The book often needed to be used with head phones as the children couldn't hear it. This meant they couldn't work in pairs so sat in a quiet area instead. Having the volume a little louder would be great.*

- *Volume needed to be slightly louder*

- *They did find it easy to use, but the volume was too quiet for a noisy classroom environment.*

Books easily marked by stylus

- *When using the pen the children tended to press on hard …. This marking the pages*

- *In addition to this, I could see that after a short period of use, the books become marked by the stylus, so I think that after a while they'd begin to look unsightly.*

- *I really think that the wand needs adapting. It scores the books making deep indents.*

Use of upper case ABCs

- *It would be good to have lower case letters instead of capitals or as well as as many children find the capital letters hard as we us lower case letters initially in EYFS and KS1.*

- *I thought the American accent was not appropriate especially in the alphabet book because of the difference in pronunciation of some words.*

- *It would be nice if the alphabet was also written in lower case as well as capitals as children start learning the alphabet in lower case.*

- *Alphabet is in capital letters - should be in lowercase for younger age group.*

- *Letter sounds as well as letter names.*

- *Need to say letter sounds for young children and have a lowercase section for young children.*

- *We teach the children using lower case rather than capital letters.*