

Switched-on Parents ahead of Primary Schools in use of iPads for Learning

Schools must act quickly as the digital divide is increasing

London, August 15th – Tech savvy and engaged parents are using iPad apps to give their children a head start in education, and are keen for primary schools to follow their lead. The leading UK education app developer, Apps in My Pocket, conducted a survey of 456 parents. It revealed how the iPad is changing the way children are learning to read and write.

Parents using the iPad or iPhone as a learning tool for 3–7 year olds were surveyed by Apps in My Pocket. Parents that were using education apps at home were overwhelmingly in favour of using iPads in primary schools, with 88 per cent of the respondents supportive of the idea. A recent Ofcom survey has highlighted the increasing use of iPad and other tablets in the home, which more than doubled in the last year*. However this isn't being reflected in schools.

Primary schools in the UK are starting to use iPads to help children with reading and writing skills. However the survey indicated that only 40 per cent of primary schools were using iPads at all, with most having just a handful. Android based tablets were even more rare, with only three per cent reporting their schools using them. Which leaves 57 per cent of primary schools not even experimenting with tablets in education. Use of iPads drops to 18 per cent in pre school.

The survey showed that while costs are a prohibiting factor, the iPad was far more prevalent in schools than cheaper Android based tablets by a factor of 14:1.

The Digital Divide

John Friend, Managing Director of Apps in My Pocket, expressed concern that speed of uptake of tablet use at home, compared to the slower uptake in schools, was in danger of widening the digital divide.

Mr Friend said, “Engaged parents are using apps like PocketPhonics before children even reach school to give them a head start with reading and writing. Children with less engaged, less affluent parents are missing out unless schools adopt a similar strategy. Schools have an opportunity to bridge this divide by using the Pupil Premium** they receive for disadvantaged children, which is now £900 per year, to buy iPads that can be used by the school for all pupils.”

Some of the comments from users of PocketPhonics demonstrated the success parents are having with the app. This is something that

schools would be able to replicate, if they had the resources to buy iPads. The app has been designed to work well in a school environment, with progress tracking available for whole classes, as well as individual children.

User XJenstarX said, "My 2 year old has learned to write, recognise and sound letters and has fun while learning. Can't rate this app highly enough."

Mandea23 commented, "She was struggling with phonics at school but this App helped her make great progress."

The survey was conducted with 456 parents that use educational apps at home.

*A recent Ofcom survey has highlighted the increasing use of iPad and other tablets in the home, which more than doubled to 24 per cent in 2013. Of those tablet users with children, a massive 91 per cent said that their children used their tablet, or had one of their own. Smartphones are now being used by 51 per cent of UK residents.

<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/being-online.pdf>

** The Pupil Premium is a payment made to schools for each qualifying child. These are disadvantaged children who have qualified for Free School Meals, or children who are in care that have been looked after by a Local Authority for more than six months.

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/p/pupil%20premium%20faqs.pdf>

About Apps in My Pocket

Apps in My Pocket Ltd is a UK based company established in 2008 to create apps for iOS that deliver best educational practice. PocketPhonics's educational excellence has made it one of the best-selling apps for teaching kids to read and write. More than 1.2 million Apps have been downloaded including over 400,000 of the paid version, and 700,000 of the free "Lite" version.