

## Transport for London

Start Your Journey Card  
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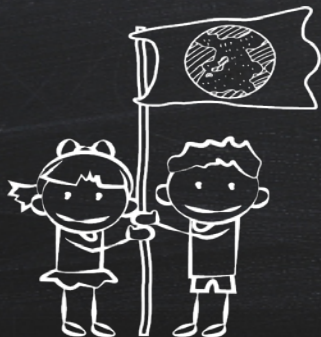
Transport for London





# TfL SYJ Zcard Evaluation

## Research Findings



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# Background & Objectives

Creative kids thinking

# Project Background



The move from primary to secondary school is a major step for both children and parents. The change in schools often means traveling further; possibly using a new mode of transport and in most cases **this is the stage where pupils begin to travel independently**



At this important transition time, TfL's Safety and Citizenship team provide a transport education service to all primary schools within Greater London. This includes a **Start Your Journey (SYJ) 'Zcard' for every year 6 pupil**, alongside a letter to each school and a lesson plan for year six teachers to use



This project is to provide a detailed understanding of how the resource can be improved



# Methodology & Sample



We spoke to **five schools in London** interviewing Year 6 pupils and teachers

## Pre-Task

To help us gather parents' views, a pre-task was completed. Pre-task examined: parent's concerns, SYJ knowledge and feedback

### Part 1: Pupil Discussion

We held a 1 hr session with a group of 5-6 Year 6 pupils, investigating their concerns about travel to secondary school, planning their journey and a deep dive into their views on the SYJ card

### Part 2: Teacher Interview

We spoke to a Year 6 teacher at each school, getting feedback on the SYJ card and lesson plan in order to understand their views on how to improve these for future

Aldersbrook Primary School, Redbridge, E12

Fullwood Primary School, Ilford, IG6

St Andrews and St Marks Junior School, Surbiton, KT6

Danegrove Primary School, Herts, EN4

St. Michaels, Enfield, EN2

# The Project Challenge



**How is the resource being used in schools and by pupils?**

**How can the resource be improved?**

Creative kids thinking

Review of the Start Your Journey  
ZCard



Creative kids thinking





# Usage of the Zcard



The SYJ Zcard was used in a number of ways:

## Simply handed out to kids

→ Reception simply placed it in their pigeon holes without passing them through the teachers

Limited value gained – kids didn't understand its purpose and only really looked at the map

## Linked to TfL travel day

→ Some schools handed out the Zcard to pupils after the TfL day as a 'freebie'

Purpose of the SYJ card more likely to be understood but limited interaction

## Handed out in class for kids to work on independently

→ Some mention from teachers that they would have liked to have gone through it in more detail but couldn't due to time pressures

Ensured interaction and thus some learning

A clear need to address how the SYJ Zcard reaches children to optimise usage and thus learning

# Overview



Overall the SYJ Zcard was well received by both teachers and children, however potential to add further value



## Main Message

- Children only understood the SYJ Zcard and its purpose if taken through it with a teacher
- Much more explanation and increased simplicity is required if kids are going to work through this alone
- The take-away from the card was about 1. travel safety and 2. planning your journey
- Lots of information available, however not necessarily digestible



## Design

- Design was liked and easy to use
- Style was well received with a "cool" wallet
- Wallet and Zcard could have been smaller to fit with Oyster or Zip Card
- Potential for an app to aid engagement



## Content

- Packed with useful and relevant information
- Led by activity type, and then by 'concern' areas, some information was more engaging than others
- Quick 'spot the difference/danger' activities enjoyed and work as good lesson fillers
- However opportunity for some of the more salient points e.g. bus etiquette to be a longer classroom discussion

# The Wallet



Wallet size is the greatest area for improvement



- Banksy-style design: liked or not rejected by kids. Mature enough for this audience who are in a transition phase (which is a big thing!)
- Some liked the slogan and message (although not widely spontaneously talked about)
- The 'trickery' of the two images appreciated by those who noticed



- Practicalities: too big to hold the Zipcard and fit into pockets. Those already using Zipcards voiced this immediately. This point, in particular, is an influence for future use
- Some lack of understanding of the message and image – not all familiar with the Hare and the Tortoise!
- Quality of wallet itself – some tearing of plastic seam



- Street art style design is good for gaining acceptance from this age group – future designs should mirror this
- Smaller wallet that fits zipcard and sits more easily in pocket would help with longevity of use
- Message clarity is reflective of how much interaction or guidance pupils were given, however subtlety is advised to promote greater use (given kids sensitivities to 'cool' at this age)

# The Map

- ➔ Interesting for kids. For some this is the first time they have interacted with a local area map (which teachers all feel is important, and pupils find engaging)
- ➔ Provides good perspective for pupils (prompts discussion about where they are vs friends schools etc.) – makes them start to think more broadly about location
- ➔ Good thing for teacher to go through
- ➔ Stickers as an activity type are well-liked

"The kids actually got quite excited about the map, it's the first time a lot of them have seen one. They spent time comparing where their different schools were"

**Year 6 Teacher**

- ➔ Not necessarily used as a planning tool as this has already been completed (when children attended their induction days)
- ➔ Lack of landmarks (e.g. large supermarkets etc.) and road names makes it difficult to navigate as this is how kids are navigating
- ➔ No bus routes marked thus planning is difficult
- ➔ Stickers in this instance are too large for the activity as they cover up some of the map detail required

## The Map – Key Improvements

- **Include Key landmarks:** these could include, but not be limited to, police stations, hospitals, supermarkets, banks etc.
- **Mark major road names and walking routes** around the school
- **Bus routes and bus stops** to be included for the major services that are close to the school and school dedicated routes
- **Stickers to be smaller and important places to be pre-marked** so as to avoid incorrect marking and covering large parts of the map
- **One teacher felt there was opportunity here to encourage teachers to take kids outside and show them how to read a bus timetable and bus route plan** (which kids admitted they found difficult)

“Most of them [the pupils] know how where big things are, like the big Sainsbury's. That's how they navigate really”  
Year 6 Teacher



# Journey Choices and Activities: Overview



The screenshot shows a resource page titled "MY JOURNEY CHOICES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL". It features a navigation bar with options: Walking, Cycling, Car, and Public Transport. The main content area is divided into several sections, each with a different background color and a large icon: a pink checkmark for "Start Your Journey", a blue 'X' for "Cycling Smart", and a green 'X' for "Why not walk?". The page is filled with text, images, and interactive elements like a "Journey Planner" and "On the Underground" activity. A large pink semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side, and a large blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side, both containing text and arrows pointing to specific parts of the page.

- Visually well presented with a clear narrative
- The cartoon style was clear and well received
- Pictures gave a clear story of key moments on a journey
- Image based and quick 'spot the difference' exercises were welcomed by teachers as good lesson fillers and pupil engagement peaked on information presented in this style

- A lot of text which was difficult for kids of lower reading ability
- In addition, the text heavy and 'busy' page is off-putting for some of those reviewing alone (without a teacher)
- A large amount of information that must be sifted through to find relevant information (which kids won't do on their own)
- Not all are sure of the purpose (strongly related to considerations up-front)
- Some language was felt to be hard and understanding limited, e.g. "a uniformed member of transport staff"



- Ensure language is clear and reading level is appropriate for all
- Where possible keep text to a minimum
- Place more emphasis on image based activities that engage children
- An adult is required to introduce the purpose for better understanding

# Activities: What Worked Well



The pupils and teachers preferred the activities that were simple and quick to complete but also required the children to think for themselves and 'self discover' – good lesson filler activities

## Bus Journeys

- Children really enjoyed spotting the bad behaviour
- However it also triggered them to ask further questions (e.g. who else should they get up for, apart from pregnant women?)
- Teachers felt that it tapped into a key knowledge gap for kids – many are very unaware of social etiquette when travelling

## On the Underground

- Lacked relevance for some but tackles a key knowledge gap

## Tips

- 'Stand your height and a step' back from the kerb – easy to remember and presented as a bitesize piece of information

## Cycle Smart

- Quick, easy and fun
- Although not relevant to all as not all are cyclists

## Getting Help

- Really useful information – many did not know they could ask the bus driver for help, for example



• Short, visual exercises work best, alongside easily digestible 'top tips'

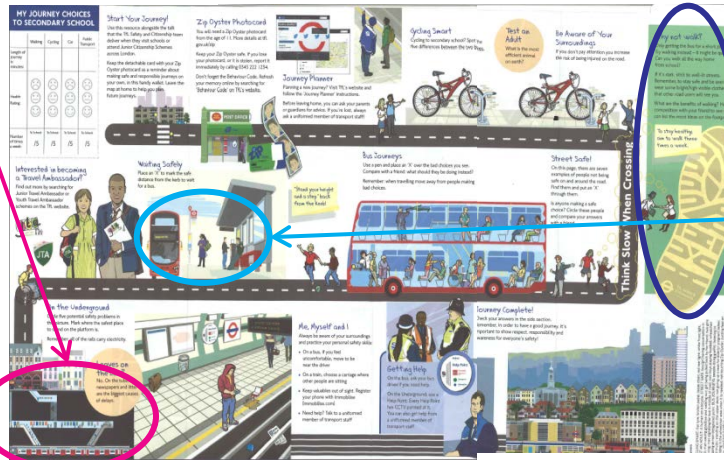
# Activities: What Worked Less Well



Those that worked less well had lower relevance or simply were not informative or fun enough to warrant a full exercise

## 'Filler' images

→ Some of the images distracted from the actual activities and confused children i.e. many tried to do the On the Underground activity using the picture directly below the text



## Why not walk?

→ Many felt this exercise was pointless as they were either walking already (so this was nothing new) or couldn't walk due to distance

## Waiting safely

→ This exercise was not required – the simple 'tip' to the right was adequate to get the message across

- Caution that 'filler images do not confuse
- Do not repeat information or create an exercise for information that can be communicated more succinctly



# Improving Journey Choices and Activities



**MY JOURNEY CHOICES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL**

	Walking	Cycling	Car	Public Transport
Length of journey (in minutes)				
Health Rating:	☹️	☹️	☹️	☹️
Number of times a week:	/5	/5	/5	

**Start Your Journey!**  
Use this resource alongside the talk that the TfL Safety and Citizenship team deliver when they visit schools or attend Junior Citizenship Schemes across London.  
Keep the detachable card with your Zip Oyster photocard as a reminder about making safe and responsible journey on your own, or with a buddy walker. Leave the card with your school.

**Zip Oyster Photocard**  
You will need a Zip Oyster photocard from the age of 11. More details at [tfl.gov.uk/zip](http://tfl.gov.uk/zip).  
Keep your Zip Oyster safe. If you lose your photocard, or it is stolen, report it immediately by calling 0747 322 1234.  
Don't forget the Behaviour Code. Refresh your memory online by searching for 'Behaviour Code' on TfL's website.

**Cycling Smart**  
Cycling to secondary school? Spot the five differences between the two lugs.

**Test an Adult**  
What is the most efficient animal on earth?

**Be Aware of Your Surroundings**  
If you don't pay attention you increase the risk of being injured on the road.

**Why not walk?**  
Why getting the bus for a short journey? By walking instead - it might be quicker! Can you walk all the way from school?

**Interested in becoming a Travel Ambassador?**  
Find out more by searching for Junior Travel Ambassador or Youth Travel Ambassador schemes on the TfL website.

**Leaves on the Line!**  
No! On the bus, newspapers and litter are the biggest causes of delays.

**Be Myself and I!**  
Always be aware of your surroundings and practice your personal safety skills.  
• On a bus, if you feel uncomfortable, move to be near the driver.  
• On a train, choose a carriage where other people are sitting.  
• Keep valuables out of sight. Register your phone with immediate traceability code.  
• Need help? Talk to a uniformed member of transport staff.

**Missing**

**Maximising Use**

There is no emergency planning section

- A number of situations such as missing their stop, their bus is cancelled to more extremes such as a terrorist attack
- A fine balance between advice and not scaremongering must be achieved in any communications

“Maybe if there was something to help me if I got lost. Like what to do or where to go”  
Year 6 Pupil

- The key draw for the SYJ cards need to be highlighted and obvious from the outset
- Engaging children at school and following the TfL day will encourage engagement and recollection of details
- Advice needs to be clear, succinct and practical
- Visual activities are a great way for pupils to be drawn to information

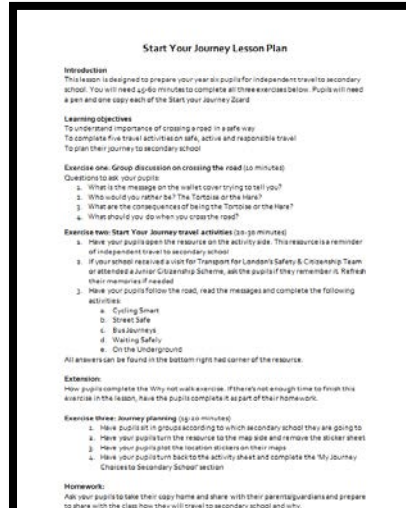
# The Lesson Plan



A lesson plan is felt to be really useful for teachers as a way of helping them discuss the SYJ Zcard and relevant issues with children



- Good as a lesson plan outline – helps reduce teachers' planning workload
- Prompt questions are useful for the group discussion on crossing the road – would like to see more of these for the other topic areas



- Not enough clear prompts for the teacher – e.g. 'now ask the children to look at the map on their SYJ Zcard' (or prompts were missed)
- No reference to other curriculum topics relevant to this area e.g. Citizenship and PSHE
- Lacking in discussion prompts for pertinent themes i.e. bus etiquette – a feeling that this could be a whole lesson
- Missing role play tasks which can work well with kids
- No audio-visual support



- Needs to be an 'idiot's guide' to provide as much guidance/instruction for the teacher as possible
- Much opportunity for the lesson plan to be further embellished, especially for the bus etiquette and general safety exercises as these link up with citizenship and PSHE lessons
- Consider changing the lesson plan to be more focussed on engaging the children outside of the activities so that they gain a greater understanding of the purpose first, before self-guiding through the activities
- Potential to incorporate audio-visual support (e.g. actual journey planning in iPads) to help engage and increase usefulness

# SYJ Zcard Online: Children's expectations



There was an expectation, from children, that the SYJ would have an **app** resource. The purpose of the app would be to help plan/ track journeys and find their way out of trouble if stuck. The **card** would remain a key resource for learning about safety



"I think my grandma uses the TfL Journey Planner"  
Year 6 Pupil



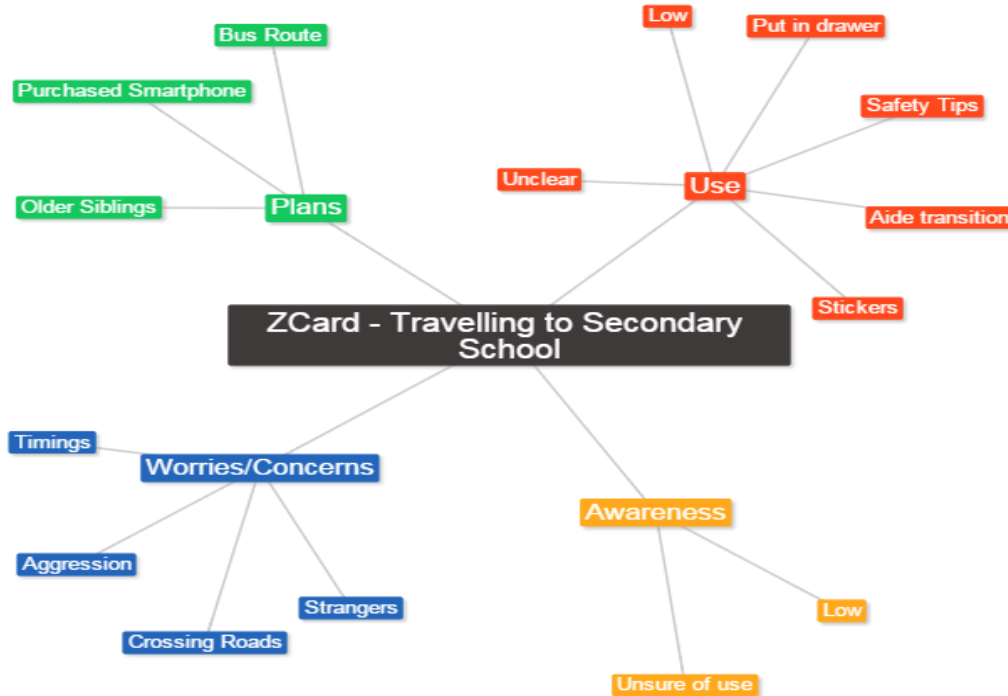
- Zcard App available on a smartphone is expected by kids
  - Many children have a smartphone already, with others expecting one when they move to secondary school
- The app would feature a map and information on what to do in an emergency
- It would be need to be downloadable and available offline – many do not have data packages
- There was low awareness of the TfL journey planner
  - This was felt to not be for children and seen as boring
  - Potential to create a more child friendly/appealing Journey planner especially for kids
- If safety learning was included, this would need to be in game format to increase engagement & digestion of knowledge
- Some opportunity for a complementary website which could be used to house some more games to reinforce the key messages, however this desire was restricted to those schools with easy access to tablets

- App should work without data and should be free!
- App would help with journey planning and emergency information – a kids' version of Journey Planner

# Parents' Feedback



Parents were unlikely to have seen the SYJ card, and were unlikely to be involved in its use. However their concerns around travel were shared



## Teacher Insight

- Teachers felt that propensity to encourage public transport use varied across the parents
- Cultural issues and safety were perceived to be the top concerns
- Teachers felt that parents were unlikely to be swayed/engaged by the SYJ materials, however, they did feel that there would be benefit in highlighting to parents that travel was free for their children

CONCLUSIONS



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# Conclusions

1

Overall, the SYJ Zcard was well received by teachers and children, however the role of the teacher is key in ensuring understanding

2

Importantly, teachers feel the resource is useful, well thought out and engaging, however some tweaks to the lesson plan could help them get even more value out of the resource

3

'Dark' design colours and imagery are good for gaining acceptance from this age group – future designs should mirror this. A smaller wallet that fits the zipcard and sits more easily in a pocket would help with longevity of use

4

The map, although not used for planning is a great tool to help expose kids to the wider area, and get them thinking more broadly about getting around. Map would benefit from more child friendly navigation tools: landmarks, road names, major bus routes and stations

5

'Safety' was the main message take-out for both pupils and teachers, which felt both relevant and important. However some greater emphasis on what to do when things go wrong would help speak more to kids' main concerns

6

'Self discover' activities are a great way to engage kids, especially those that are short, visual and allow kids to think for themselves/challenge themselves

7

An online resource could compliment the SYJ Zcard, however teachers in particular felt it could not replace the card for learning. An online resource (an app) would, however better serve planning and in-the-moment emergency advice

Next Steps



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# Next Steps: Key Considerations

There are a number of distribution issues and nuances to explore which will impact how the Zcard is used and received by children (and teachers) which may require further exploration....

1

**Teacher awareness**

Not all teachers had seen the card ahead of the interview, leading to different levels of knowledge

2

**Aided or solo interaction**

Children had different needs from the card if viewed alone vs with teacher

3

**Exposure to TfL safety day**

Teachers and pupils who had attended the TfL safety day had a greater engagement with and understanding of content contained in the in card

4

**Relevance**

Pupils had different levels of engagement based on their travel plans to secondary school. E.g. those who knew they would walk were less likely to engage with card

5

**Current travel behaviour**

Those already travelling independently were more likely to be engaged, although concerns differed



# How the SYJ is card distributed



Across the sample there was no consistent way the cards were distributed

## Reception = Gatekeeper

### To teacher

Cards without lesson plan left on desk. If time taken to inspect cards, teachers excited about content and feel it will be valuable



### Direct to children

Placed in cubby-holes or mail slots



### Handed out at TfL day

Given as a take-away following interactive TfL day

### Handed out in class

Felt that content allowed kids to self-teach. Gave them time to explore and chat among themselves



**Most effective distribution is via the teacher, not direct to kids. Reception is an important gatekeeper and instructions must be eye-catching and clear to make sure the full pack gets to the teacher!**

# Engaging the pupils



The most engaged children were those who had received the SYJ card through their teacher, and who had also attended the TfL safety day

## Ways to Engage the Pupils

### Engage the teachers

- If the teachers are able to provide time in class to at least let the kids discover the card themselves, the take-outs are greater

### Timing

- The optimum time to engage the kids on the planning aspect is when they find out about their secondary school placement in March
- At this point they will be attending inductions days and route planning with their parents

### Link to TfL Safety day

- Use as a follow up to the TfL safety talk
- The most effective way it can be used is as a follow up to re-inforce messages from this day
- **Note:** Do not just use as a give-away at the end of this day, as it tends to be disregarded



For pupils, timing and context is everything. To make the most of the SYJ card, kids need to have time to explore, and the messages reinforced with associated learning

# Engaging the teacher



Not all teachers were aware of the SYJ Zcard and thus had not been through them with their class

## Ways to Engage the Teacher

### Grab their attention

- Clear instructions to reception
- Try to address pack to a teacher directly
- Alert teacher ahead of time (email or mail) that pack will be coming, so they are able to plan lesson ahead of time

### Call out lesson plan

- Bright pack with headlines that call out focus and contents, including lesson plan and activities

### Boost the lesson plan

- 4 of 5 schools had attended the TfL safety day, and found this to be highly engaging and memorable for kids, some felt elements of this could be used in the lesson plan
- Opportunity to reference other elements of the curriculum
- Interactive materials (e.g. video that could be accessed online)

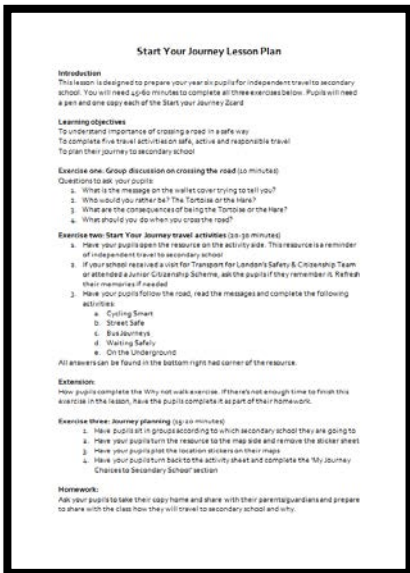


There is room to improve engaging the teacher to help them make the most of a resource they identify as worthwhile and well-thought through

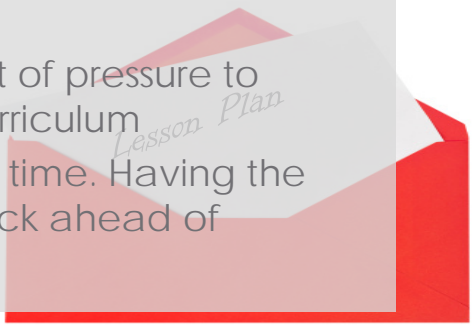
# Delivery of the lesson plan



The Lesson Plan is lost in amongst a vast amount of information teachers / schools receive every day



- None of the teachers we spoke to had used this information
- Zcards kept but extra information can be ignored and discarded by reception or teacher as importance and content is not immediately noticed
- They felt under a large amount of pressure to complete lessons within the curriculum
- Teachers like to plan ahead of time. Having the lesson plan or notice of the pack ahead of receiving it would help



- Lesson Plan must get to the right person, i.e. Year 6 teacher in plenty of time to plan the lesson
- Contents must stand out and sign post exactly what is in the pack. For example consider brightly coloured envelopes with clear indication for what is inside
- Potentially equip teachers with plan and pack at the TfL safety day



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