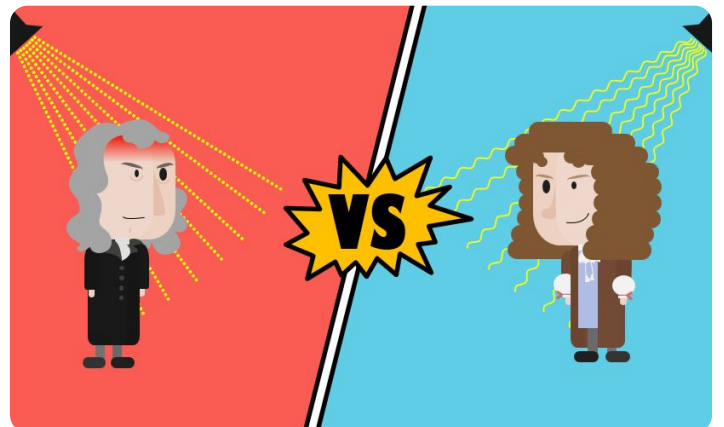
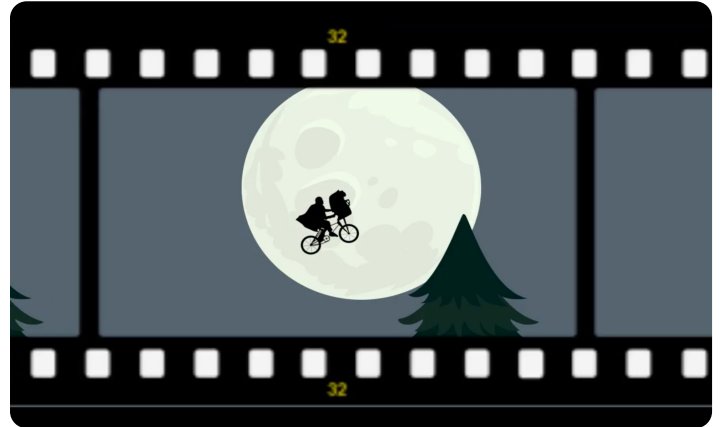


Find the right KS4 and KS5 learning support

Tools rated and compared by teachers, parents and students





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“Congratulations to the Class of 2025 ‘A team’ at Islington Collegiate where more than half of grades were A to A.”*



Caroline Norman

City of London Academy Highgate Hill

1. Introduction and approach

The learning support landscape has expanded rapidly. Schools and families now have access to more high-quality support options than ever before, from traditional one-to-one tutoring to an increasing number of digital learning platforms such as Up Learn and Seneca. These tools promise to improve understanding, boost confidence, and help students achieve better academic outcomes.

However, this growth in choice creates complexity. Each learning support option comes with a different approach, level of structure, style of engagement, and cost, which can make it difficult for schools, parents, and students to identify which solution best meets their needs.

What works well in a classroom or school-wide setting may not be the most effective option for independent study at home: factors such as accessibility, alignment with exam specifications, and enjoyment can significantly influence engagement and impact.

To better understand how these learning support options perform in real-world use, nearly 1,600 parents, students and teachers were surveyed. Respondents evaluated a range of platforms across four key areas: content quality, student engagement, exam preparation, and value for money. The findings provide insight into how different tools are experienced by those who use them most, helping schools and families make more informed decisions about learning support.

The results show a clear pattern. Platforms that **teach** content in a structured way, using clear explanations and exam-aligned practice, consistently outperform tools focused mainly on revision or assessment. Aggregating scores from across all respondent groups, **Up Learn ranked highest** for content quality, exam preparation and value for money. Private tutoring also performed strongly, particularly for student engagement, but scored lower on value for money.

Free and school-led platforms, such as Seneca, Educake, and Tassomai, were commonly used but ranked lower across all four dimensions.

Importantly, there was strong alignment between parents, students and teachers. All three groups prioritised tools that led with **structure, depth and exam relevance** over content volume or gamification.

For families looking for support alongside school, the most effective approach will be one that combines **high-quality teaching, science-backed instructional design and consistent exam practice matched to the child's needs, confidence and goals.**

2. The Survey

What the survey data shows overall

The survey collected ratings from **parents, students, and teachers**, using a 1–5 scale (from “Terrible” to “Excellent”) across four key dimensions:



Quality of learning content



Engagement and motivation



Exam preparation



Value for money

Across all respondent groups, **Up Learn and tutoring consistently ranked highest** for quality of content, exam preparation, and engagement.

3. Platform ranked by audience

How did the platforms rank by audience?



3.1 Parent rankings and views

Parents ranked Up Learn highest overall across all four dimensions: quality of content, exam preparation, value for money and motivating their child. 83% of parents rated Up Learn's video lessons and quizzes as 'Good' or 'Excellent', and 72% gave the same rating to Up Learn's revision summaries, practice exam papers, and practice exam questions.

Tutoring ranked a close second for engagement and exam preparation, reflecting how much parents value human reassurance and tailored explanations. However, tutoring scored lower on value for money, possibly due to the higher overall cost.

Parents ranked Seneca 4th (out of 10) on value for money, but it ranked lower on quality of content and exam readiness.



Parent takeaway:

Parents prioritise **clarity, structure, and confidence** over cost alone.

3.2 Student rankings and views

Students rated Up Learn highest for quality of content, exam preparation and engagement. On quality of content, Up Learn scored 4.5 out of 5, where the average score was just 3.4. Many student responses highlighted that Up Learn helped them understand difficult topics properly. Tutoring ranked second for quality of content and engagement, but ranked lower for exam preparation.

Students felt that Tassomai was reasonably engaging, but gave it a lower score for exam preparation. Seneca and Educake both ranked low for engagement, suggesting that there is a perception of them as school-assigned, box-ticking tasks rather than a valuable learning tool.



Student takeaway:

Students value **feeling taught and supported**, not just quizzed.

3.3 Teacher rankings and views

Teachers ranked Up Learn highest for quality of content and second only to tutoring for exam preparation. This recognises Up Learn's curriculum alignment, depth, and cognitive-science approach.

Teachers ranked Seneca highest for value for money, reflecting its usefulness as a classroom tool. However, it ranked 7th for exam preparation and 5th for engagement, suggesting some limitations in practice.



Teacher takeaway:

Teachers value **scalable impact and evidence-based design**.

4. Survey results

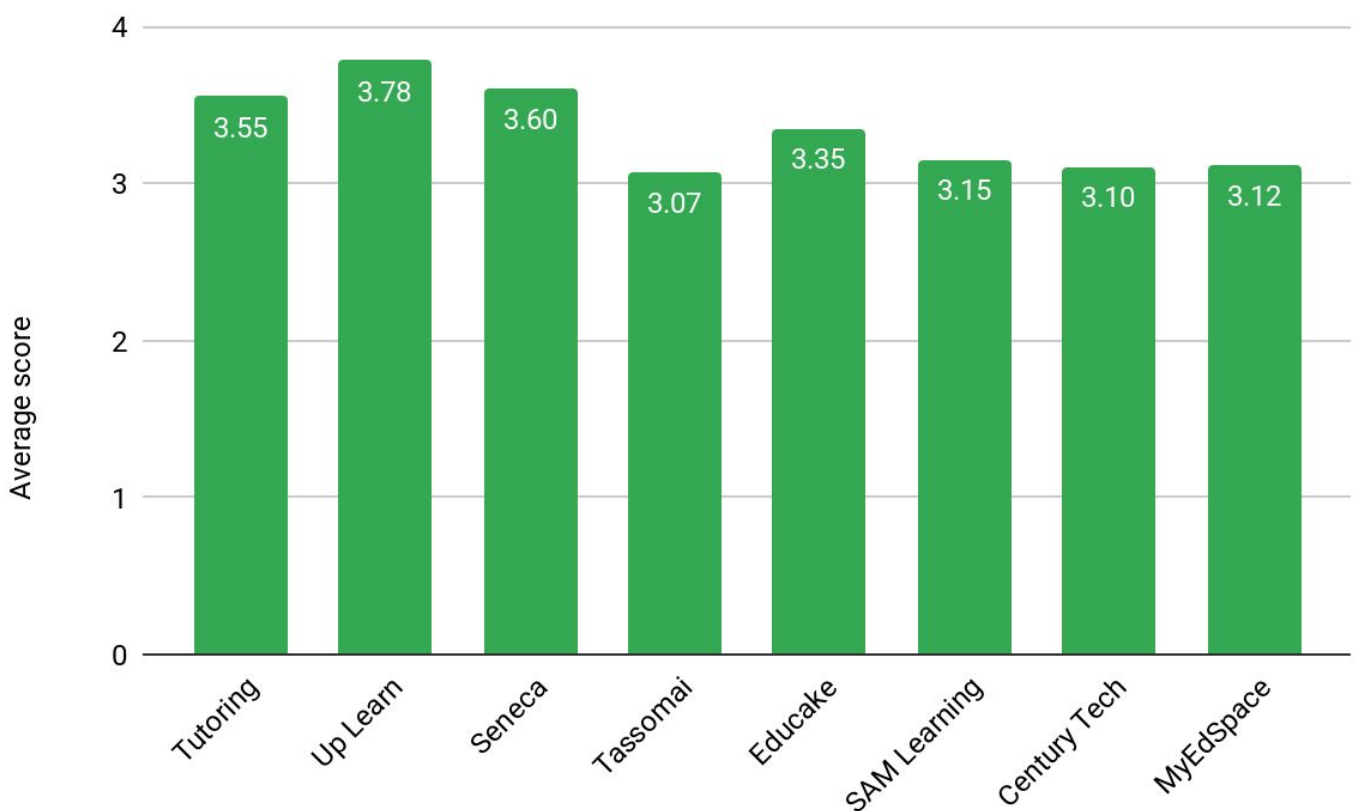
In Summary

In each respondent group, **Up Learn topped the rankings for quality of content**, and was consistently **rated highly for exam preparation and engagement**.

Other tools, such as Seneca, Educake and Tassomai, had more variable scores and ranked well across a narrower set of dimensions. In general, value for money scores tended to be higher for free or low-cost platforms, with paid platforms performing well in this area when they were perceived as having high-quality content and good exam preparation materials.

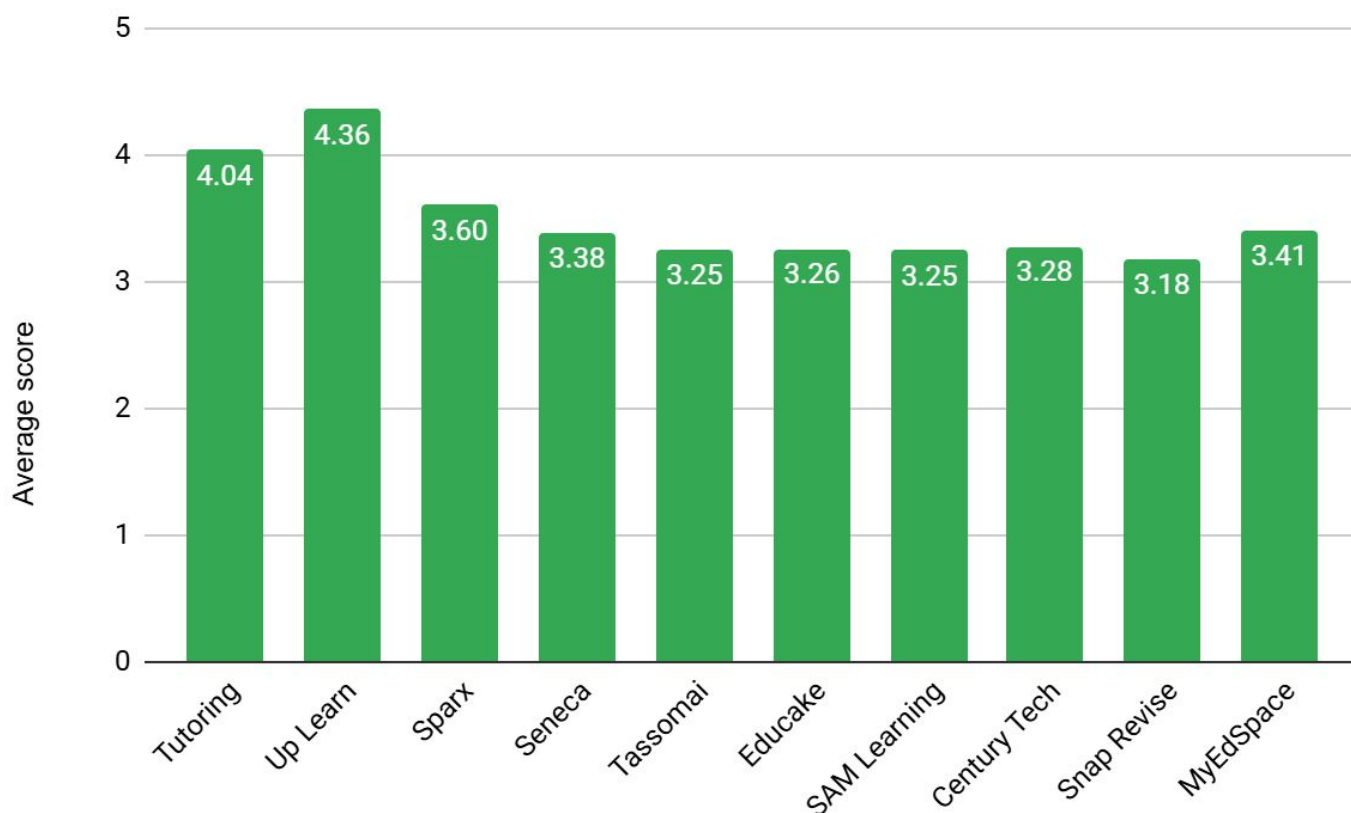
The charts below show the aggregated scores from across all three respondent groups. When all the scores were combined, Up Learn was second only to tutoring for student engagement, and **ranked highest overall** for quality, exam preparation and value for money.

Value for money: aggregated scores



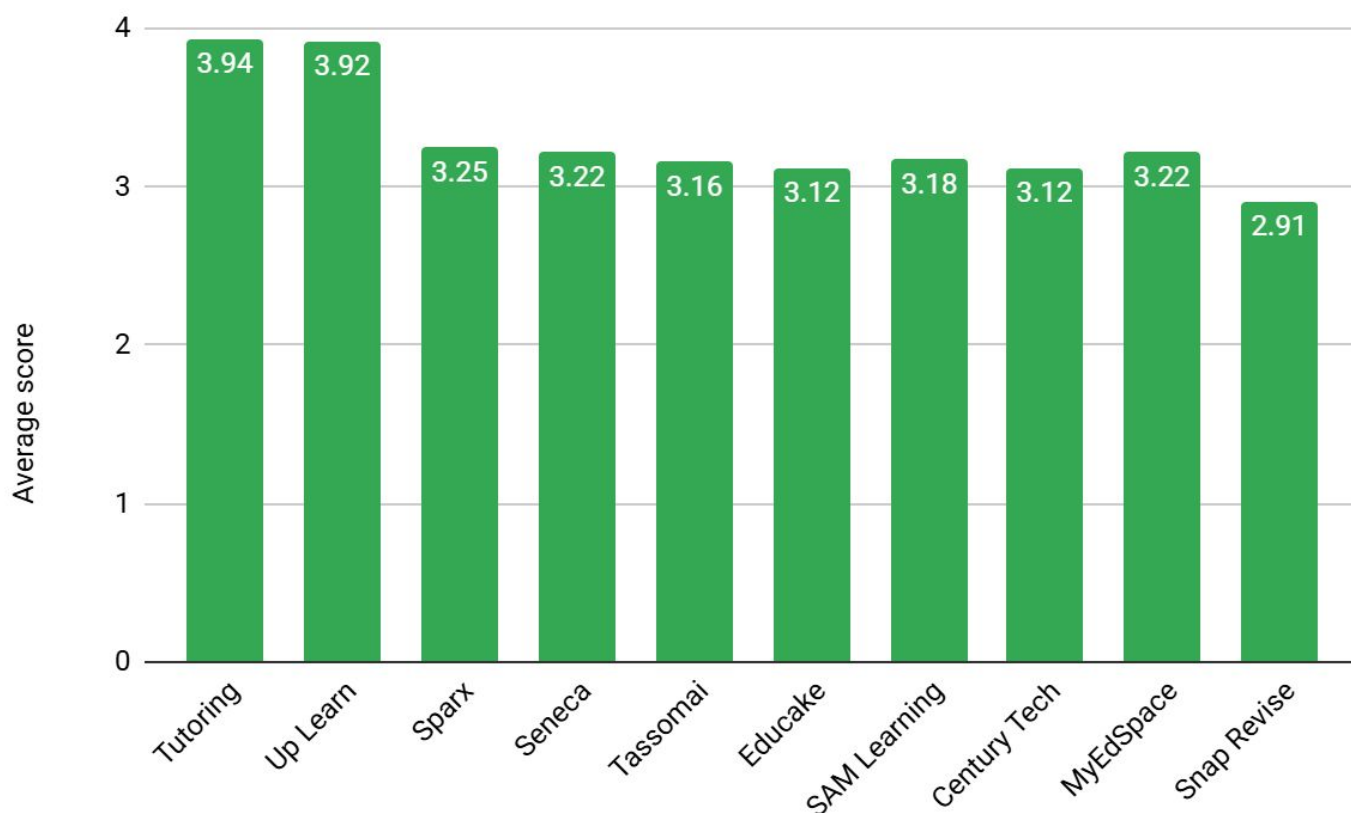
Across platforms reviewed by both parents and teachers, Up Learn scored highest on value for money. Given that Up Learn is a paid product, this suggests that respondents considered learning outcomes when giving their ratings, judging that the impact was worth some additional cost.

Quality of content: aggregated scores



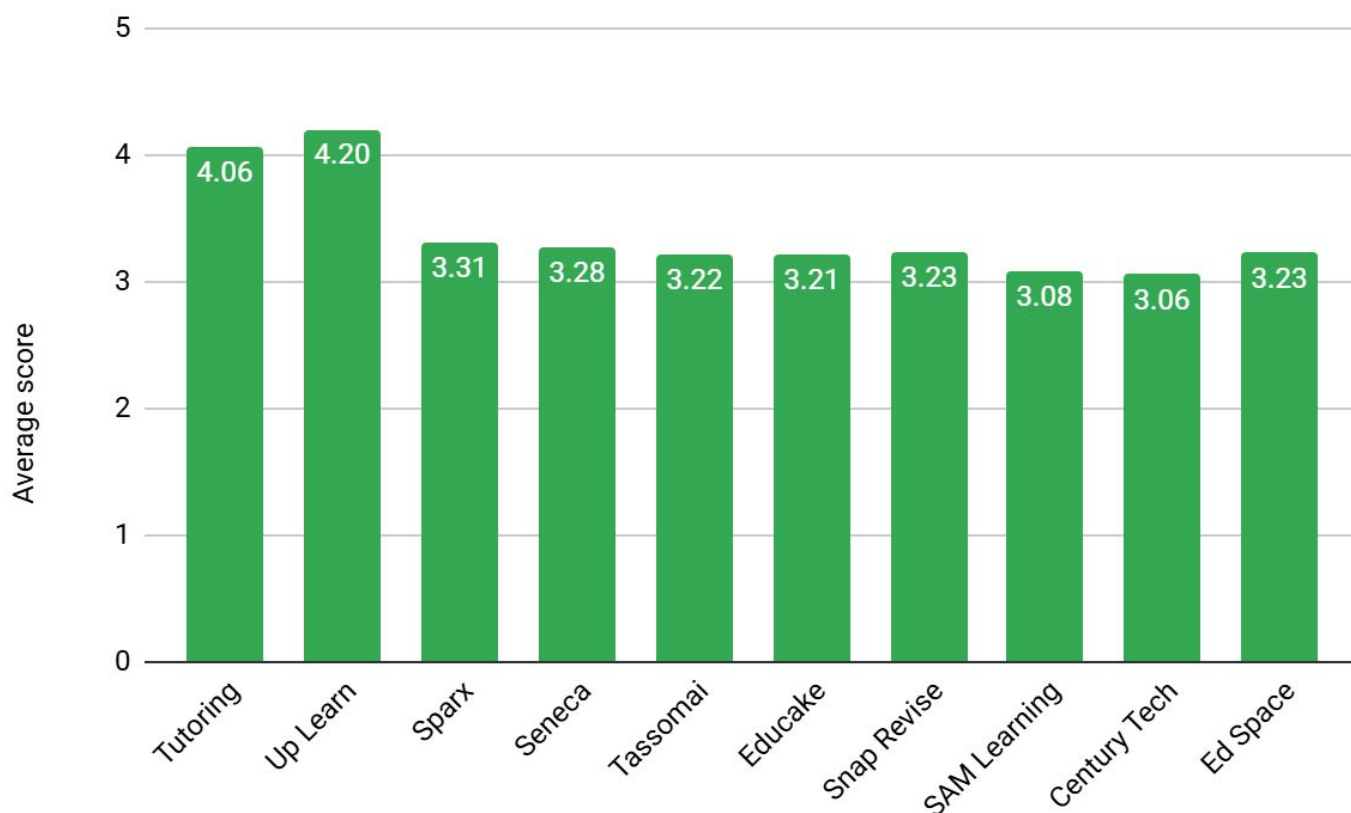
Respondents rated Up Learn significantly higher for its quality of content than any other intervention. Aside from tutoring, other platforms clustered around the mid-range, suggesting they are viewed as being less effective for teaching and deep understanding.

Engagement and motivation: aggregated scores



Across student, parent and teacher reviews, Up Learn and tutoring were rated significantly more engaging than other options. Particularly among students, platforms focused primarily on quizzes or homework-style tasks tended to score lower.

Exam preparation: aggregated scores



Up Learn received the highest average score for exam preparation, with tutoring a close second. Other platforms scored significantly lower, suggesting that these are viewed as useful supplements rather than complete exam-preparation solutions.

5. Summary

Combining the scores from across all three groups, the **survey shows a clear pattern:**



Up Learn ranked highest overall for quality, exam preparation and value for money



Tutoring ranked highly, especially for student engagement, but ranked lower for value for money



Seneca, Tassomai and Educake scored in the mid-range for quality, exam preparation and engagement.

GCSEs and A Levels represent a pivotal moment in a student's education. Supporting young people through KS4 and KS5 requires not only high-quality resources, but a deep understanding of both the pressure, and most importantly, the opportunity.

We recognise how much is at stake for students, families and schools alike. That's why Up Learn partners with schools and supports families to equip students with the knowledge, confidence and structured learning tools they need to navigate these years successfully. Our goal is to empower students to approach their exams feeling prepared, supported and capable of achieving their potential.

Further reading:

If you would like to understand more about what Up Learn offers and its impact, check out:

- [Case studies](#)
- [Impact report 2024](#)
- [School survey 2025](#)
- [Evaluation of Learning Outcomes 2025.](#)



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