



Oak National Academy

2023/24 EVALUATION REPORT

OCTOBER 2024



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Executive Summary

Oak National Academy (Oak) was set up in 2020 as an emergency response to school closures during the pandemic. During this time teachers used Oak's resources to support remote learning. These resources were widely used and at its peak 2.5 million pupils accessed Oak lessons in one week. Once schools reopened Oak broadened its remit and made available teaching resources for curriculum design and lesson planning and delivery in addition to remote learning resources.

Oak became an Arm's Length Body in September 2022 and while their core outcome areas remained unchanged, they shifted focus beyond remote learning to provide free, adaptable and high-quality resources suitable for in-class use. In the 2023/24 academic year Oak released new teaching resources for over 6,000 lessons in five subjects (Maths, English, Science, History and Geography). The new lesson resources were specifically designed to support in-class use and were released from January with the majority released in the final term of the academic year. Other resources launched in 2023/24 included a new curriculum visualiser tool and an AI-Powered Quiz Designer which produces questions and high-quality "distractors" for multiple-choice questions, a central part of many lessons. Oak's new curricula and teaching resources are available on a standard Open Government Licence (OGL) which allows teachers, schools and other educational organisations to build and adapt content to suit pupils' needs.

Oak has commissioned an independent evaluation from ImpactEd every year since 2020. Like in previous years this evaluation investigated the impact of Oak in the most recent year, in this case the 2023/24 academic year. The aim of the evaluation was to investigate the impact of the use of Oak resources on teachers, pupils and the education sector more widely.

The findings summarised in this report are based on a mixed methods approach, including:

- ▶ A quantitative survey with 1,004 participants (including Oak and non-Oak users) to investigate the potential impact of Oak National Academy on teachers' workload, teachers' wellbeing and pupils' academic performance, as well as asking Oak users about their usage of Oak, their feedback on the resources and impact in other areas like curriculum planning.
- ▶ Qualitative research with teachers consisting of 16 interviews and eight focus groups with a total of 21 participants.
- ▶ Qualitative research with pupils consisting of three focus groups with a total of 22 participants.
- ▶ Oak's anonymised analytics data related to engagement (e.g. lessons taken, lessons downloaded) by school type and geography, including areas of deprivation.

Implementation and usage

A total of 192,760 teachers¹, over 1 in 3², used Oak resources between 24th February and 24th July 2024. This was a 115% increase on the same period in the previous year. Over the whole 2023/24 academic year, teachers downloaded a total of 714,189 resources and pupils took part in 7,190,928 lessons through Oak National Academy, with an average of 52,075 pupils and 35,346 teachers using the site each week (excluding school holidays).

Teachers from 15,402 schools in England accessed resources in the 2023/24 academic year, which accounted for 63% of all schools. The top five subjects of Oak lessons used by schools were Maths (21%), English (19%), Science (17%), Computing (9%) and History (8%).

Based on survey responses, the majority of users started using Oak prior to this academic year. The main use cases of Oak were lesson planning, lesson delivery in the classroom and curriculum planning, as well as setting cover lessons and work for absent pupils.

Impact on teachers

The evaluation found teachers who used Oak to have a generally more positive experience around their role than their non-user counterparts. Typically, Oak users worked less, felt better able to manage their workload and had better wellbeing.

Oak users reported working almost five hours less per week than non-users (an average of 40.9 hours compared to 45.7 hours) with this difference increasing with more frequent use of Oak.

Oak users also had a more positive sense of workload management, feeling more able to complete their assigned workload, feeling their workload was acceptable and feeling that workload was less of a serious problem at their school.

Nearly three quarters of users (73%) reported that using Oak had saved time with 45% reporting this saved time had led to a decrease in workload and 28% saying this saved time had been repurposed for other useful activities such as supporting pupils in class. The typical time saved in a week for these users was four hours.

Oak users reported better wellbeing than non-users, with an average of 43.4 compared to 41.1.

Oak users were more likely to see themselves staying in teaching, compared to non-Oak users. Only 16% of Oak users anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time compared to 25% of non-users.

¹ Includes estimated offline usage of Oak's resources based on 2024 survey data.

² Calculation based on [DfE School workforce in England, November 2023](#).

Impact on the sector

Oak curriculum and teaching resources were widely used and its positive impact was acknowledged by many users. Around half of users thought that Oak's curriculum and teaching resources had improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum.

Two thirds of Oak users said they had used Oak to change their curriculum with 39% using it to add or swap topics, 22% to change the sequence of the curriculum and 6% using Oak as their main curriculum.

60% of users considered the 'curriculum sequencing and structure' of Oak resources to be high quality and 63% for teacher resources. This rating was slightly improved for teacher resources compared to last year, which is likely to be attributable to the impact of new teacher resources which started to be released this academic year.

Oak resources were widely used as a starting point for curriculum development with users adapting materials to meet the specific needs of their school.

In terms of teaching resources, 71% of users said they had applied an Oak idea or model to their own teaching, with lesson structure and quiz questions the most frequently used.

Non-users typically explained why they had decided not to use Oak resources by saying they thought they were suitable for emergency use only or they already had lots of resources available to them.

Impact on pupils

There was no significant difference between Oak's users and non-users on their perception of the proportion of their pupils exceeding expectations and behind expectations.

Teachers widely felt that Oak provided valuable support for circumstances such as cover, sickness and exclusions and helped to minimise learning gaps for pupils in these circumstances.

Teachers were positive about the benefits of using Oak resources with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and EAL (English as an Additional Language).

1. Introduction and methodology

Oak National Academy was established during Covid as a resource supporting teachers with curriculum and lesson planning and lesson delivery in a range of subjects. During the pandemic when schools were closed, Oak resources were often used to deliver remote learning to pupils who were unable to attend school. Use of Oak in schools has continued since Covid but with widening use beyond this original focus on remote learning. While use of Oak as an ‘emergency’ resource has continued, providing resources for cover lessons or remote learning when pupils are unable to attend school, it has also been increasingly used to support mainstream teaching activities such as curriculum and lesson planning and delivery of lessons in the classroom.

Over the 2023/24 academic year teachers downloaded a total of 714,189 resources and pupils took part in 7,190,928 lessons through Oak National Academy, with an average of 52,075 pupils and 35,346 teachers using the site each week (excluding school holidays). A total of 192,760 teachers³, over 1 in 3⁴, used Oak resources between 24th February and 24th July 2024. This was a 115% increase on the same period in the previous year.

In April 2023, ImpactEd were commissioned to conduct an end-to-end evaluation of Oak’s impact in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This report focuses on the impact of Oak in the 2023/24 academic year, following three previous annual evaluations conducted in [2020/21](#), [2021/22](#) and [2022/23](#).

Research objectives

The aim of this annual evaluation is to answer the following research questions:

- ▶ To what extent has Oak National Academy achieved its desired impact for:
 1. Teachers (workload and expertise)
 2. Schools (curriculum quality and resilience)
 3. Pupils (continuous access and attainment)
- ▶ How exactly has Oak National Academy contributed to these improvements?
- ▶ What, if any, were the most important success factors or barriers that enabled or prevented these outcomes being achieved?

These questions focus on the extent to which Oak has met the outcomes set out in its Theory of Change (see following page). The Theory of Change articulates the problems the organisation is aiming to address, how it sets out to solve them (inputs and activities) and what changes happen as a result of their activities in the short-term and long-term (outputs, short-term outcomes and long-term outcomes). Sitting above this model is the organisation’s ultimate purpose and mission.

³ Includes estimated offline usage of Oak’s resources based on 2024 survey data.

⁴ Calculation based on [DfE School workforce in England, November 2023](#).

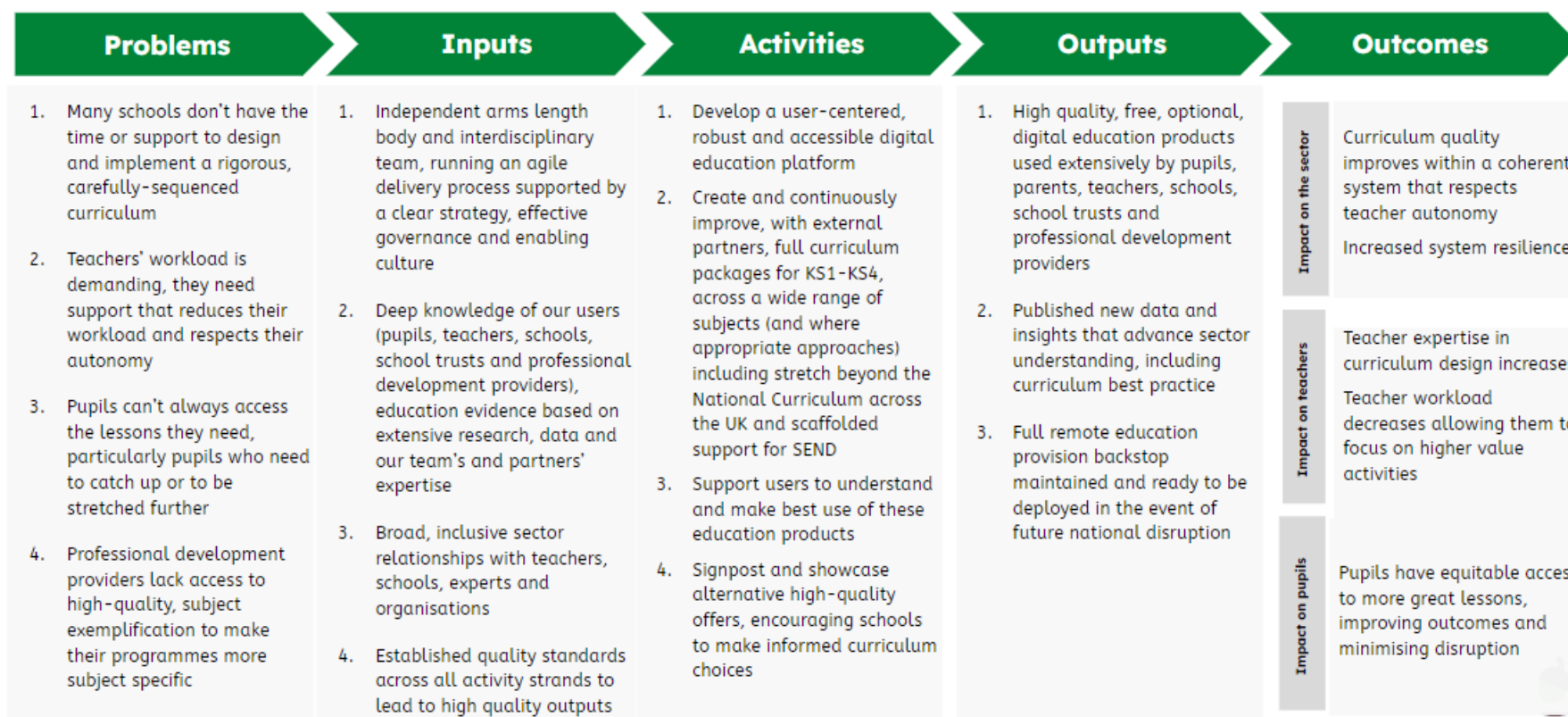
Oak National Academy: Theory of Change



THEORY OF CHANGE

Purpose: Improving pupil outcomes and closing the disadvantage gap by supporting teachers to teach, and enabling pupils to access, a high quality curriculum

Mission: We work with schools, teachers and the wider education system to create and support the use of world-class digital education products built around our rigorous, high-quality curriculum



This report, in particular looks at the impact Oak has had on the following outcomes:

- ▶ **Teachers:** Teacher expertise in curriculum design increases, and teacher workload decreases allowing them to focus on higher value activities
- ▶ **Pupils:** Pupils have equitable access to more great lessons, improving outcomes and minimising disruption

This evaluation took a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative survey findings with qualitative interviews and focus groups. Both surveys and qualitative research were undertaken from April until July 2024. Some outcome areas have been considered through both quantitative and qualitative methods, and are triangulated in this report, for example the impact of Oak on teacher workload and curriculum design. Providing relevant context to the findings, this report has also integrated Oak's own platform analytics, which provides us with a picture of Oak implementation and usage over the academic year.

Evaluation design: survey design, sample and analysis

The survey was designed to include both validated measures and custom questions. The validated questions came from the Teacher Workload Survey (TWS)⁵ and the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)⁶. Both these surveys have been run with nationally representative samples of teachers, which provide robust external benchmarks. The benchmarks used for Teacher Workload Survey is from 2023 and WEMWBS teacher benchmark is from the Teacher Wellbeing Survey 2024. Additionally, a national benchmark has been taken from the Department for Education's 2023 report, 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'⁷.

The survey was open from April until July 2024. In order to reach both Oak users and non-Oak users, the survey was distributed in a variety of ways, including using Oak's and ImpactEd's social media accounts and networks, through paid social media advertisements and through a targeted survey provider, SmartSurvey.

There was a total of 1,004 participants to the survey: 55% of respondents were current users of Oak while 45% were not. Most respondents were teachers (63% of users, 50% of non-users), the next most frequent respondents were middle leaders (22% of users and 30% of non-users), as opposed to senior leaders (14% of users and 19% of non-users).

The largest group of respondents worked in primary schools (43% of users and 55% of non-users), followed by secondary schools (41% of users and 32% of non-users). A small proportion of respondents worked in independent schools (6% for users and non-users) and very small numbers worked in specialist schools, nurseries, all-through schools and alternative provision.

⁵ Department for Education, February 2024. '[Teacher Workload Survey 2023](#)'

⁶ Education Support, 2024. '[Teacher Wellbeing Index 2024](#)'

⁷ Department for Education, April 2023. '[Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1](#)'

We also asked survey respondents about the governance model of their school. For both users and non-users, the largest group were staff that worked in a Local Authority maintained school (43% users, 45% non-users), closely followed by staff that worked in schools which were part of a Multi-Academy Trust (41% users, 39% non-users). 11% of users and non-users worked in stand-alone academies; small proportions of respondents worked in schools with other governance models.

Maths, English, Science and History were the subjects used most by survey respondents, which broadly aligned with the most frequently used subjects based on Oak analytics data (with Maths and English the most frequently used subjects).

As this was not a randomised experiment and Oak and non-Oak users were not randomly assigned to groups, we had to make sure both groups were properly matched and weighted within our sample to minimise bias in results. Therefore, when analysing the difference in response between Oak users and non-Oak users, we created two comparable groups using a technique called Propensity Score Matching (PSM) to identify and match individual respondents across the two groups. This statistical matching technique helped to reduce the potential bias of confounding variables and reduce treatment assignment bias. As teachers' responses to questions and workload are often influenced by role and school type, these were used as criteria to create matching user and non-user groups. Using this PSM approach allowed us to make the groups more comparable and minimise bias in the results.

PSM matching based on type of school and school role was undertaken on the Oak user sample (551) and the non-Oak user sample (453). This process resulted in matched user and non-user groups with 380 respondents in each group.

The matched sample was used for comparisons between Oak and non-Oak users, while the full sample was used for the other analyses of questions that were only asked to Oak users.

For the wellbeing and teacher workload questions, we compared the results of Oak and non-Oak users to the relevant national benchmarks in the analysis, so that we were able to compare both user types to the national average. This helped to contextualise the findings and understand how (statistically) significant any observed differences were.

Throughout the report, we have conducted analysis to examine differences between different sub-groups of respondents based on factors including:

- ▶ Job role (teacher / middle leader / senior leader)
- ▶ School type (e.g. primary state school / secondary state school / independent school etc.)
- ▶ Type of Oak use (curriculum planning, lesson planning, setting homework, setting cover lesson, setting work for absent pupils, lesson delivery in the classroom and professional development)

We have reported on findings related to distinctions between sub-groups where relevant – where this is not set out explicitly, there were no differences of note between sub-groups.

We also conducted analysis to test for statistical significance of differences between groups (e.g. between Oak users and non-users) and subgroups (e.g. between teachers, middle leaders and senior leaders). A result has statistical significance when it is unlikely to have occurred due to chance. When reporting on statistical significance, we use the standard convention of a p-value of less than 0.05. This means that the likelihood of observing changes at least as severe as those observed, if it were, in fact, the case that the intervention had no impact, is less than 0.05 (i.e. highly improbable). This supports the rejection of the hypothesis that the intervention has no impact, but it does not mean that the probability of the intervention having no impact is, itself, less than 0.05. If a finding is not statistically significant, this does not rule out an effect but means that we cannot confidently say that the changes observed were not due to random chance.

For this year, we also included longitudinal analysis of responses from respondents who had completed the survey and had also completed it in the previous year. The aim of this analysis was to investigate patterns of use across two years and to allow a comparison between the impact of current and newly released resources. The matching across the surveys undertaken last academic year and this academic year produced a total sample of 66 respondents; this small sample size severely limits the reliability of findings for the groups and sub-categories.

Evaluation design: qualitative research design, sample and analysis

For the qualitative research component of this study, we ran a combination of focus groups and 1-to-1 interviews using a semi-structured interview approach. The rationale behind these two methods is as follows:

- ▶ **Focus groups:** These are in essence group discussions led by a moderator and can be used for gathering information on people's collective experiences of a particular programme or product, in this case Oak. The collaborative and dynamic element of this method means that participants are more likely to get to more developed answers by responding to and adding to each other's contributions.
- ▶ **Interviews:** As a group setting has its limitations in terms of sharing individuals' detailed stories, we spoke to a number of participants individually to share their stories in more detail. During these interviews, we aimed to understand the individual's experiences through their own specific experiences and stories.

Both methods used a **semi-structured interview** format, which means the interview guide includes questions or issues to be asked about, but the moderator does not necessarily need to stick with the exact wording. It also includes a variety of "probe" questions. While the moderator is expected to steer the conversation in the intended direction, the participants are largely free to explore different topics.

The focus groups and interviews were held during June and July 2024. Participants were recruited through the survey, as well as individuals who had opted in to participate in research through pop-ups on Oak's website. From those that signed up, a rough sample was

created to ensure that there was coverage across subjects and school types, role in school and how respondents use Oak, although the representativeness of the sample was limited by the number of participants who signed up to take part in the qualitative research.

For teachers, a total of five focus groups and 16 interviews were held with a total of 37 participants. While the aim of qualitative research was never to be fully representative of a wider sample, it is helpful to understand the breakdown of the sample compared to the overall user group; 20 of the individuals used Oak with secondary school pupils, 10 with primary school pupils, and seven worked in specialist, independent or all-through school.

For pupils, a total of three focus groups were held with a total of 22 participants, 12 from primary schools and 10 from secondary schools.

The qualitative data was analysed using a deductive thematic approach, meaning that we systematically coded the data to find common themes and present these, drawing on examples where appropriate. Exploring and framing specific themes within the analysis, several specific teacher experiences or stories that came out of the follow-up interviews have been highlighted in the report.

Triangulation with platform analytics

Throughout this report, we have embedded Oak's own analysis of platform usage for two reasons:

- ▶ Providing context on implementation and usage of Oak over the 2023/24 academic year
- ▶ Triangulating either survey or qualitative findings with usage analytics.

Analytics data reflects the period between 1st September 2023 and 21st July 2024 for this academic year. ImpactEd Evaluation has not been involved in collecting this data and it has been indicated in the report when we are referring to Oak's own analytics data. This data has been treated as offering additional contextual information and not as key findings by themselves.

Limitations

Readers should bear in mind the following areas for potential bias or limitation:

- ▶ As users were not randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups, there is always a potential for (self-selection) bias in the results, e.g., if those choosing to use Oak have specific characteristics in common beyond those which we have collected. We have aimed to mitigate this risk by weighting the sample when comparing Oak vs non-Oak users.

- ▶ Both the survey and qualitative samples did not match perfectly with Oak's wider user base. While we did not expect this to significantly affect the findings, it is possible that this may bias results.
- ▶ While the sample overall was sufficiently large to allow for meaningful statistical analysis, sub-group breakdowns for some particular user groups within the sample were smaller, making the variability in the data higher and reliability of findings for specific sub-groups lower. This was particularly the case for analysis using the longitudinal sample (66 respondents).
- ▶ All data on teacher outcomes was based on self-reporting of teachers. While we have included some validated measures to reduce bias, it should be noted that this data set will be limited as it did not include any other data points like classroom observations or assessments.
- ▶ Pupil progress that is reported in this report is based on teacher observation only. This report did not include an analysis of attainment data or directly speaking to pupils, which should be considered when interpreting these findings.

2. Implementation and usage

Key findings:

A total of 714,189 resources were downloaded and pupils took part in 7.2m Oak lessons in the 2023/24 academic year.

Oak users were a mix of those who had started during the pandemic and those who had started since with strong recruitment of new users in the 2023/24 academic year.

The use of Oak resources has diversified over time with increased use of its lesson planning and delivery resources. This change seems to have been driven by very new users who were using the resources for lesson planning and delivery much more than for other activities.

Who used Oak's resources?

Over the 2023/24 academic year teachers downloaded a total of 714,189 resources and pupils took part in 7,190,928 lessons through Oak National Academy, with an average of 52,075 pupils and 35,346 teachers using the site each week (excluding school holidays).

A total of 192,760 teachers⁸, over 1 in 3⁹, used Oak resources between 24th February and 24th July 2024. This was a 115% increase on the same period in the previous year. This total number of teachers is calculated by measuring direct users and estimating indirect use.

Direct users are unique users who have downloaded a lesson resource and significantly engaged with Oak's curriculum sequences in the last six months. From February 2024 to July 2024, there were 100,614 direct users. Research shows that teachers frequently share Oak's downloaded resources with other teachers. A survey of 429 teachers who use Oak showed that 91.6% share them; 54.4% share via their school's shared drive, and 37.1% share directly with other teachers (e.g., via email). Only 8% don't share.

Oak has, therefore, conservatively estimated that for every direct teacher user, 91.6% share it with just one further teacher. The 192,760 total users are therefore comprised of 100,614 direct users x 91.6% who share resources with one additional teacher. Dr Samuel Sims at the UCL Institute of Education and analysts at the Department for Education have reviewed and provided feedback on this approach. Further work to improve the estimation of indirect users is now underway between Oak and ImpactEd.

Oak remained widely used in the 2023/24 academic year across all types of school and school phase. Oak lessons were used across key stages, with 7% in Key Stage 1, 28% in Key Stage 2, 50% in Key Stage 3, and 13% in Key Stage 4. Oak data on daily pupil activity showed a clear weekly cycle with around 28,000 lessons taken a day. There was one spike in use on

⁸ Includes estimated offline usage of Oak's resources based on 2024 survey data.

⁹ Calculation based on [DfE School workforce in England, November 2023](#).

2nd November 2023 which was when a storm in the south of England caused more than 100 schools to close. There were 2.5 times more lessons taken on that day than on the average school day.

Maths and English were the most popular subjects (Maths 21%, English 19%), closely followed by Science (17%), Computing (9%) and History (8%) based on the number of lessons received by pupils.

Oak users were asked in the survey about how many teaching staff they thought were consistently using Oak resources in their school. **27% of respondents reported that their department or phase used it, a further 29% reported that it was used across multiple departments or phases**, and 9% reported that it was used by the whole school. Around a third (35%) reported that as far as they were aware, only they used it. Secondary school users were more likely to report that their whole department used it than primary school users reporting that their whole phase used it (33% of secondary users compared to 24% of primary users). Primary school users were more likely to report Oak being used across the whole school. Figure 1 below shows use by school phase.

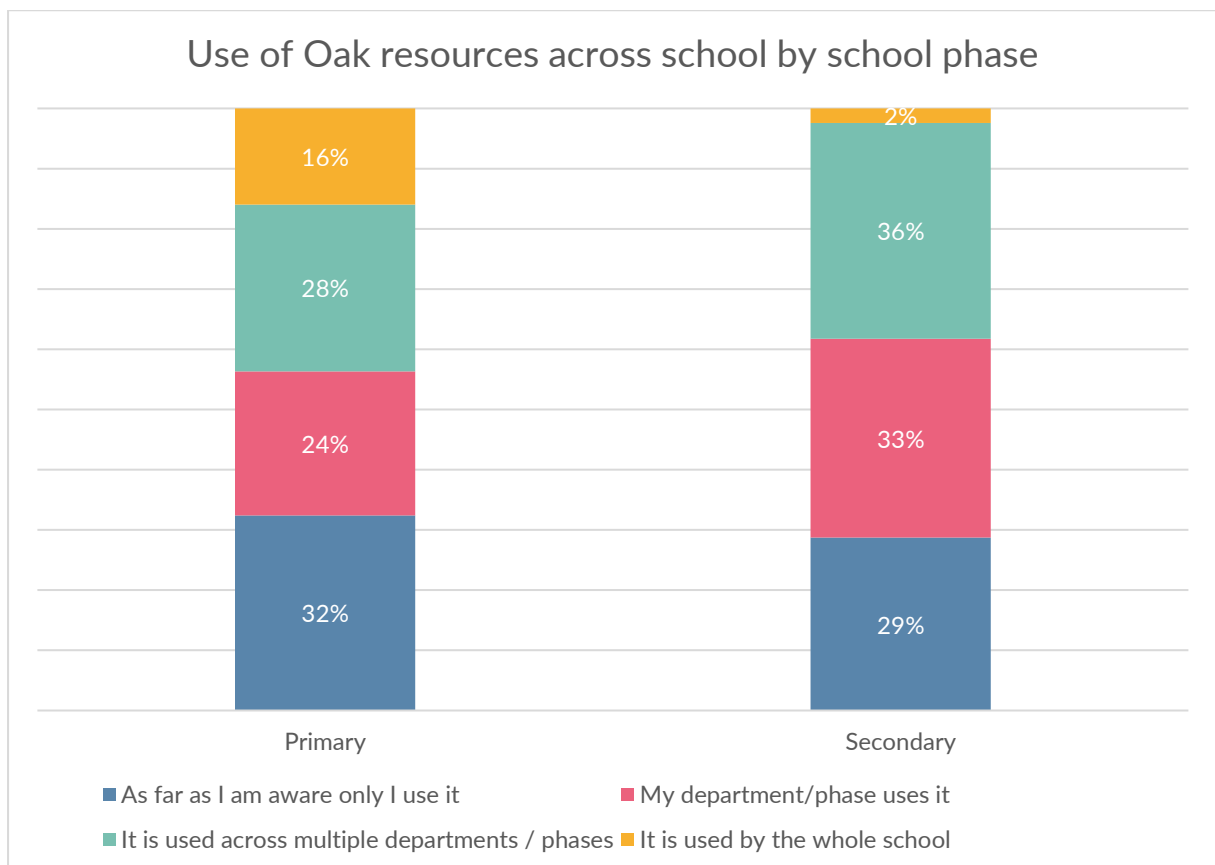


Figure 1: Users reporting how Oak was used across their school comparing responses of primary school users (n=213) to secondary school users (n=209)

Oak was more frequently used in disadvantaged areas based on the number of lessons downloaded by IDACI quintile (income deprivation affecting children index): 19% more

downloads (per school) occurred in the most deprived areas (IDACI deciles 1-3) than in the least deprived areas (IDACI deciles 8-10).

How were Oak's resources used?

Key finding: Oak users were a mix of those who had started during the pandemic and those who had started since with strong growth of new users in the current 2023/24 academic year.

Of those who were currently using Oak, a majority of respondents (59%) said that they started using Oak during the pandemic but a substantial number (41%) had started since the pandemic with 13% starting in the current 2023/24 academic year. These figures suggest Oak is attracting substantial numbers of new users year on year outside of 'emergency' circumstances¹⁰.

Key finding: The use of Oak resources is diversifying over time with increasing use of its lesson planning and delivery resources. This change seems to be driven by very new users who are using the resources for lesson planning and delivery much more than for other activities.

The use of Oak resources is also changing over time. Compared to the previous year, users in the 2023/24 academic year reported using Oak more for lesson planning and lesson delivery. Using Oak for lesson planning and delivery was reported as a main form of use for 40% of users in 2024 compared to 33% in 2023.

This shift in use patterns appears to be impacted by new users who are using Oak notably less for 'emergency' activities and substantially more for lesson planning and delivery. For example, for users that started using Oak in 2023/24, 25% reported using it for 'emergency' activities compared to 72% of users who starting using Oak during the pandemic. Conversely, 60% of new users report using Oak for lesson planning compared to 45% of users who started during the pandemic.

¹⁰ This finding was corroborated by Oak analytics data that indicated a 115% increase in users from February 24th to July 24th, 2024, compared to the same period the previous year.

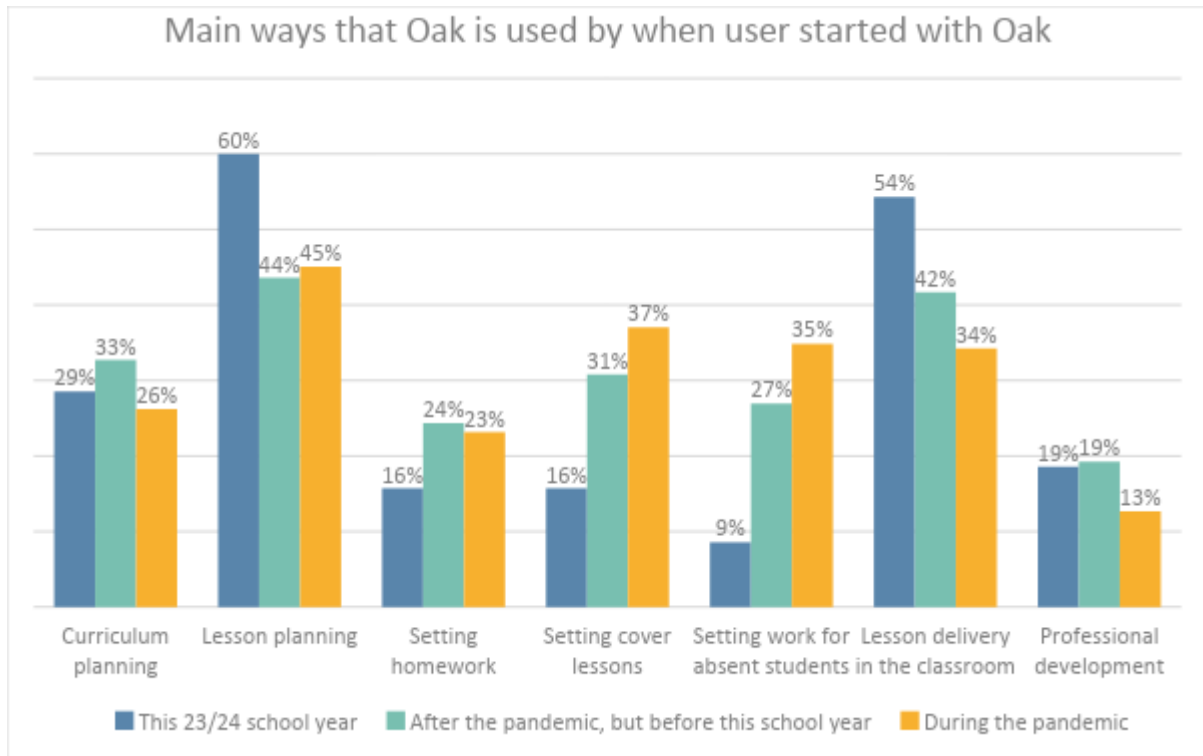


Figure 2: Users reporting how Oak was used across their school comparing responses from users according to when they started using Oak resources; This 23/24 school year (n=70), After the pandemic, but before this school year (n=156), During the pandemic (n=324).

There is also some indication that over time users are broadening their use of Oak resources. Analysis of longitudinal respondents who had answered the teacher survey in both 2023 and 2024 showed proportionately less use of Oak in 2024 for ‘emergency’ activities (cover lessons, work for absent pupils and homework) and more use of Oak for ‘mainstream’ activities related to curriculum and lesson planning and delivery. As depicted in the chart below, these mainstream activities were selected by 35% of users in 2023 and then by 64% by these same respondents in 2024. Conversely, 53% of users selected ‘emergency’ activities in 2023 and then 41% in 2024. Sample sizes were small for this analysis so findings should be treated with caution.

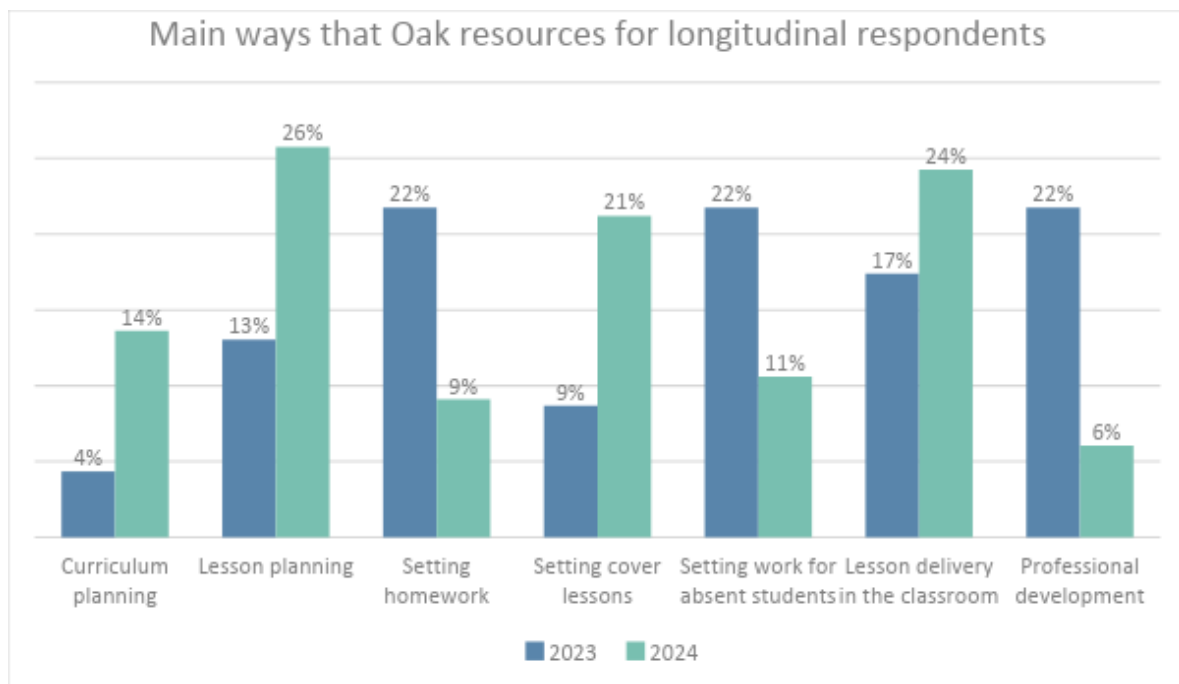


Figure 3: Users reporting how Oak was used across their school comparing responses for longitudinal users who answered the question in the 2023 and 2024 survey (2023 n=69, 2024=66).


The clear trend for both new users and existing users is toward use of the full range of resources offered by Oak. Very new Oak users are using the resources for lesson planning and delivery much more than for other activities. Older Oak users, particularly those that started during the pandemic, are more evenly distributed in the range of activities they use Oak for.

In qualitative research, discussion highlighted the range of ways in which Oak resources were used in schools. A number of participants talked about how they had initially used Oak to supplement their teaching in particular areas but were now using it to support a variety of teaching tasks.

An English specialist said that originally they had found the resources fit for home learning but not in the classroom. But since new resources had been made available, they were using it more frequently. They work in a deprived area where pupil motivation was low and found that they really engaged with the Oak resources. *“I was looking at the updated poetry content around power and conflict and found the content amazing. The first Year 10 assessment we did on poetry, their essays were phenomenal and I believe this was down to Oak.”*

Participants described how they would use Oak resources to support their planning and gain new ideas. Participants talked about dipping in and out of Oak resources to get new ideas about how to teach subjects and gain inspiration. One teacher had used the starter tasks as pupils enter lessons and felt that these were well pitched and engaged their pupils during class transitions. Another English specialist said that they had used it to support their

planning for units focussed on Romeo and Juliet, An Inspector Calls and a Christmas Carol. They said:

 *I use them to get new ideas. I found that there were lots of conceptual threads which I would not have thought of myself and they were perfect for my Year 11's. For example in 'An Inspector Calls' there was a great lesson on Eva as a victim of class and gender and I thought this was a great idea for an essay."*

There were also examples of Senior Leaders who were using Oak systematically for curriculum design. A number of participants attributed this use to the high standard of Oak resources. A Head of English at a secondary school found Oak beneficial for structuring learning at Key Stages 4 and 5, emphasising consistent pedagogy. *"I advocate the use of Oak because I think it's a really useful way of structuring learning for students"* reported a Deputy Head at a primary school. He described how he had used Oak for curriculum design after an inadequate Ofsted rating. He said *"The real attraction I guess to Oak was the fact that we knew that it had been designed by teachers for teachers. That was a real pull..."* Another English teacher stated that she had found the Oak lesson planning for Macbeth and Alice in Wonderland very useful, and it had really helped to develop and adapt her own offering.

There were also examples of participants who said they only used Oak in non-routine circumstances, for example for a cover lesson when a teacher is absent or to provide guidance to non-specialist teachers in a subject. A Science teacher reflected that she used Oak to set work when teachers were absent: *"Mainly Oak certainly in the science department is used as a cover option. So if a teacher's not in, they might set an Oak lesson as a cover lesson for another teacher to basically turn up, show the video, answer the questions on the worksheet."*

A Deputy Head of a primary school highlighted that the way she uses Oak resources is to support non-specialist teachers, particularly in history, after the departure of a subject leader. *"We needed to draw upon a wealth of resources... support our teachers...in delivering subjects like history...we use them very differently now...It wouldn't be directly delivered to our pupils by the Oak teacher. It would be kind of regurgitated throughout our teachers."*

A number of participants felt that there was an association within the sector of Oak with remote learning during the pandemic. They felt this acted as a barrier to school staff using the resources beyond 'emergency' circumstances: the experience of the pandemic had cemented the reputation of Oak as a resource for remote learning or as an emergency resource.

Use of Oak's new AI tools

Oak users were asked whether they had heard of Oak's first iteration of AI tools including a quiz designer and a lesson planner. Research was carried out before the launch of Aila, Oak's new AI lesson assistant, which means these findings did not reflect the reception of these later tools. Around half of users (56%) had heard of these early AI tools with a quarter (26%) reporting they had tried them. Qualitative feedback on these tools was positive with users

commenting on its user friendliness and clear layout. A common theme raised was how the tool had helped to increase the efficiency of lesson planning and preparation.

One user reported *“Oak’s AI tools have made my lesson planning more efficient, personalised, and data-driven, enhancing the overall teaching and learning experience in my classroom.”* Another commented, *“It allowed me to become more efficient with my time, my organisation and inclusivity of lessons”*.

3. Impact on teachers

Key findings:

Oak users generally had a more positive experience around their role than non-user counterparts. Typically, Oak users worked less, felt better able to manage their workload and had better well being.

Oak users reported working almost five hours less per week than non-users (an average of 40.9 hours compared to 45.7 hours) and this difference increased with more frequent use of Oak.

Oak users had a more positive sense of workload management, feeling more able to complete their assigned workload, feeling their workload was acceptable and feeling that workload was less of a serious problem at their school.

Nearly three quarters of users (73%) reported that using Oak had saved time with 45% reporting this saved time had led to a decrease in workload and 28% saying this saved time had been repurposed for other useful teaching activities. These users typically saved four hours per week.

Oak users reported better wellbeing than non-users, with an average of 43.4 compared to 41.1.

Oak users were more likely to see themselves staying in teaching compared to non-Oak users: Only 16% anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time compared to 25% of non-users.

Impact on teacher workload

Key finding: Oak users reported working almost five hours less per week than non-users (an average of 40.9 hours compared to 45.7 hours) and this difference increased with more frequent use of Oak.

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions to act as an indicator of their workload, and the responses of Oak users and non-users were compared to identify any differences in perceptions of workload that could be associated with using Oak.

Firstly, the survey asked, "In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you spend in total on activities related to your job?" Responses were weighted to ensure the hours reported were comparable across respondents with full time and part time roles.

Oak users worked an average of almost five hours less per week than non-users (40.9 hours compared to 45.7 hours), a difference that was statistically significant. Both these figures

were lower than the 48.7 hours average teacher workload reported in the 2023 Teacher Workload Survey¹¹.

Teachers that used Oak more frequently, reduced their hours to a greater extent. Those using Oak at least once a week saved an average of nine hours work (working an average of 36.6 hours), compared to teachers that didn't use Oak (working 45.7 hours).

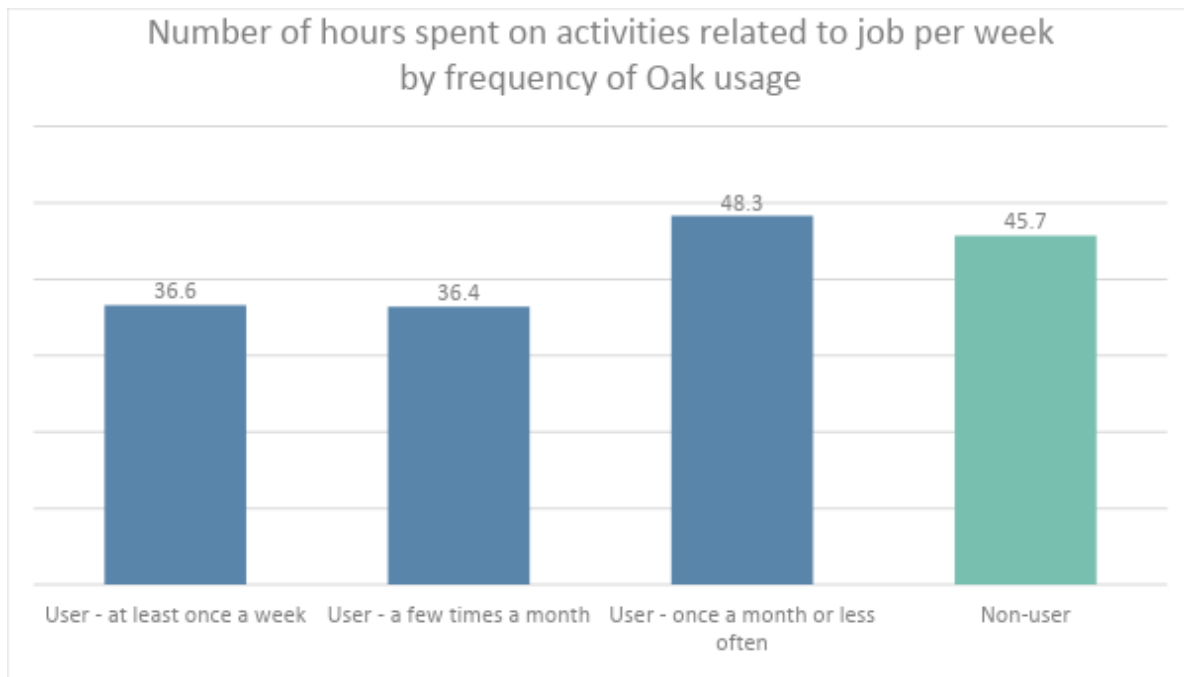


Figure 4: Number of hours reported to be spent on activities related to job in most recent full working week, by frequency of Oak usage, User n=380, Non-user n=380.

Teachers of all levels who used Oak worked fewer hours than non-users. Teachers worked an average of 4.5 hours fewer per week, middle leaders saved 6.1 hours per week and senior leaders saw a reduction of 3.8 hours a week.

¹¹ [Teacher Workload Survey, 2023](#).

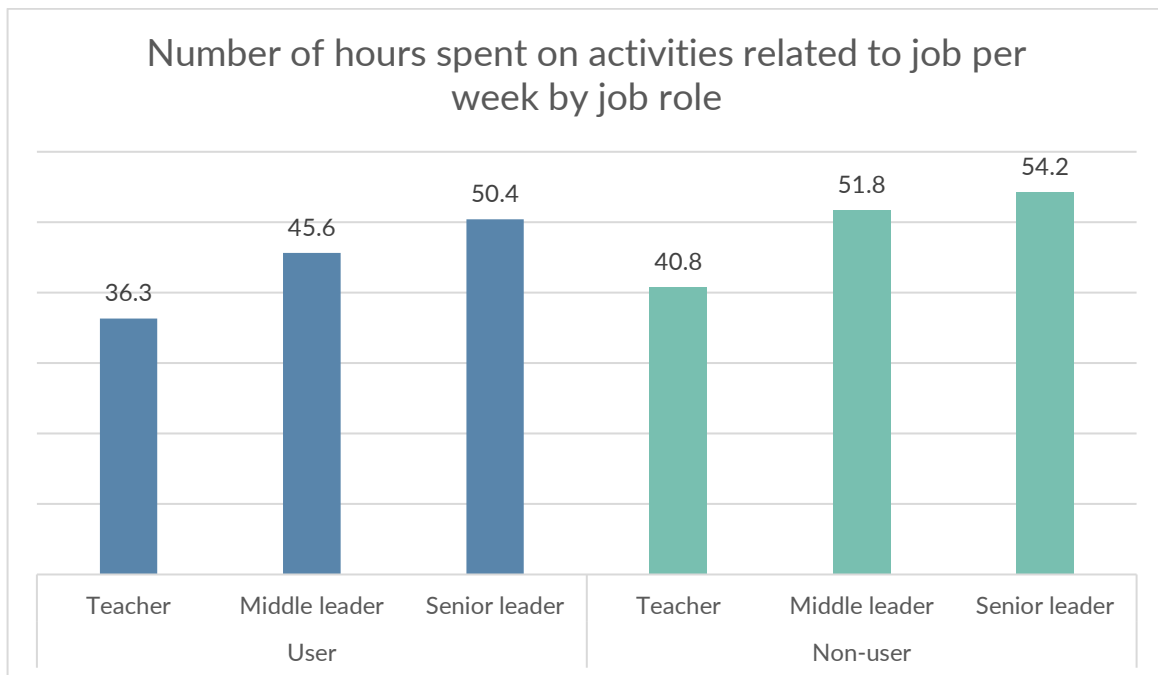


Figure 5: Number of hours reported to be spent on activities related to job in most recent full working week, by job role, User n=380, Non-user n=380.

We also asked users approximately how many hours they spent in total on individual planning or preparation of lessons in the most recent full working week. **Oak users reported spending more time than non-users on lesson planning and preparation**, an average of 12.8 compared to 9.1 hours, a statistically significant difference. One contributing factor to this difference was likely to be the proportionately larger size of trainee and Early Career Teachers (ECT) among Oak users (16% for users compared to 6% for non-users). These less experienced teachers reported spending longer on lesson planning and preparation than other teachers¹².

Key finding: All teachers, whether they used Oak or not, were equally as likely to consider workload a problem at their school.

We asked all survey respondents the extent to which they agreed with three questions/statements related to workload:

- ▶ To what extent, if at all, do you consider teacher workload to be a serious problem in your school? (1: Not a serious problem – 5: Very serious problem)
- ▶ I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours (1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)
- ▶ I have an acceptable workload (1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)

¹² Teacher trainees and ECT reported a mean of 15 hours.

Oak users and non-users were equally likely to consider teacher workload a serious problem in their school, with 75% of both groups considering teacher workload a fairly to very serious problem (scores of 3, 4 or 5 out of 5).

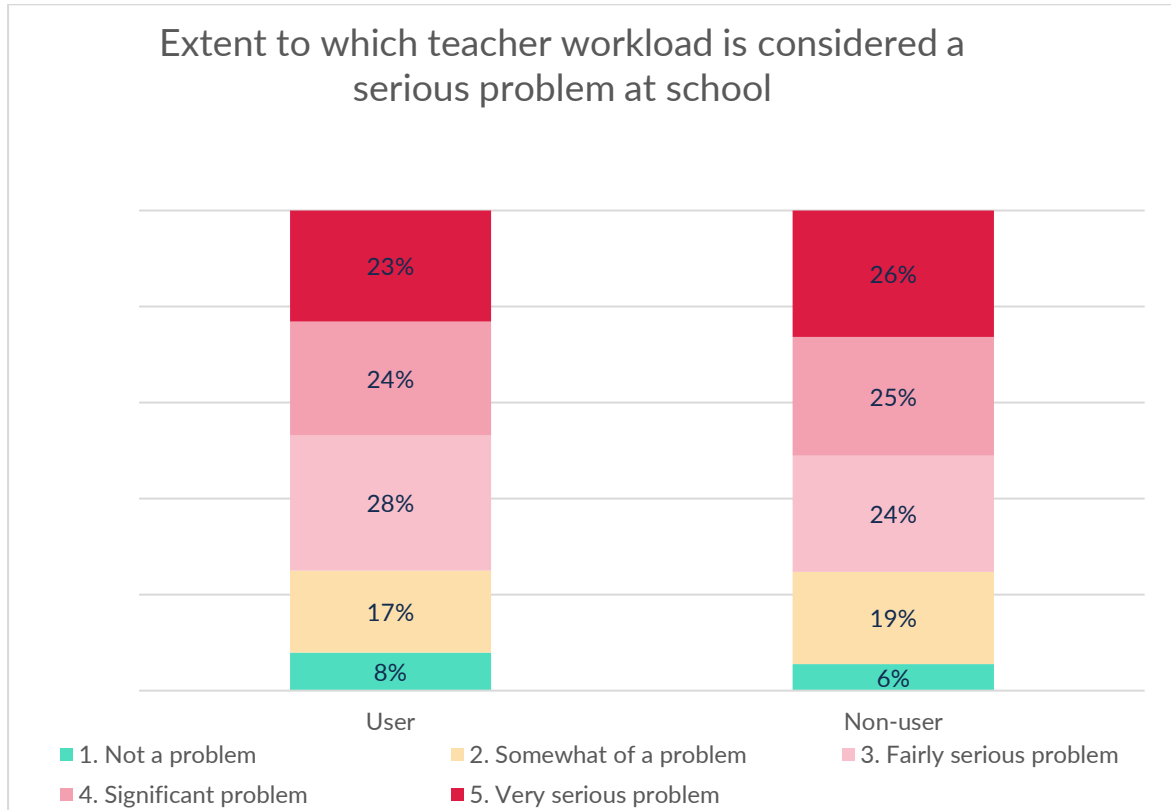


Figure 6: Extent to which teacher workload is considered to be a serious problem in the respondent's school; response options from 1: Not a serious problem to 5: Very serious problem, comparing Oak users to non-users; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

Although overall results were similar on this question, there were important differences for the different roles. User teachers were less likely than non-user teachers to consider teacher workload a problem (fairly to very serious problem); 68% compared to 73% (statistically significant). Although middle and senior leader users were more likely to consider teacher workload a problem; 87% compared to 84% for middle leaders and 79% compared to 70% for senior leaders.

Key finding: Oak users were slightly more likely to report being able to complete their assigned workload during contracted working hours and that they had an acceptable workload than non-users. The most frequent Oak users were most likely to report an acceptable workload.

Oak users were slightly more likely to report being able to complete their assigned workload during contracted working hours than non-users, with 20% of users agreeing with this statement (scores of 4 or 5 out of 5) compared to 18% of non-users (not statistically significant).

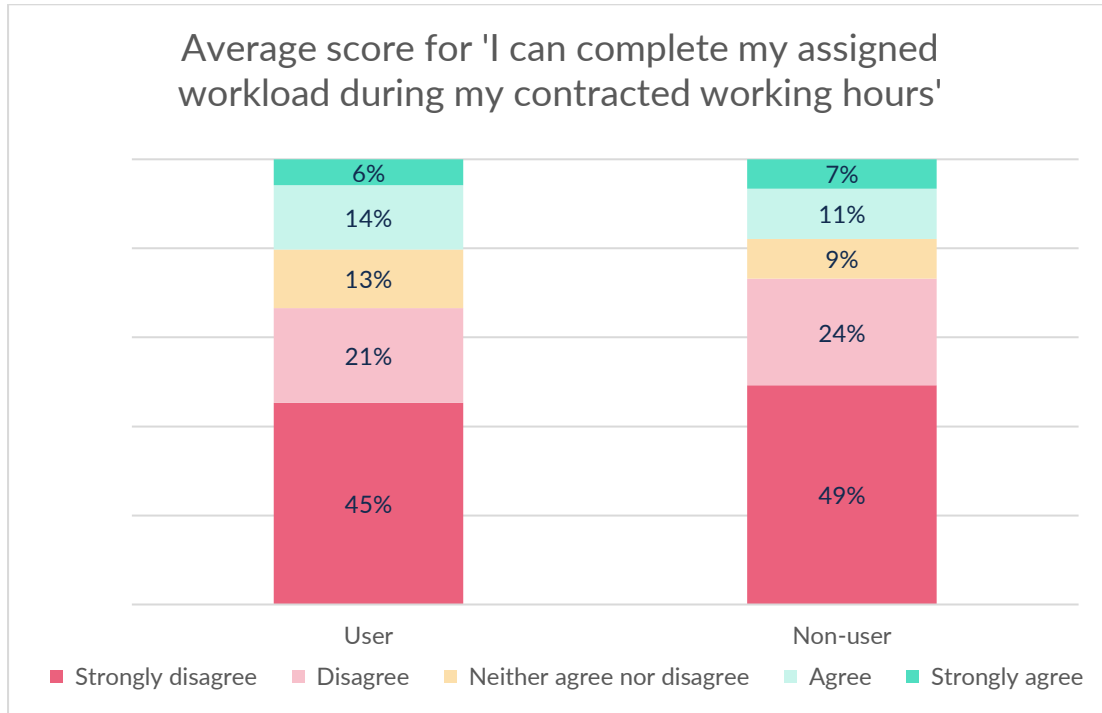


Figure 7: Responses to the statement 'I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours', response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

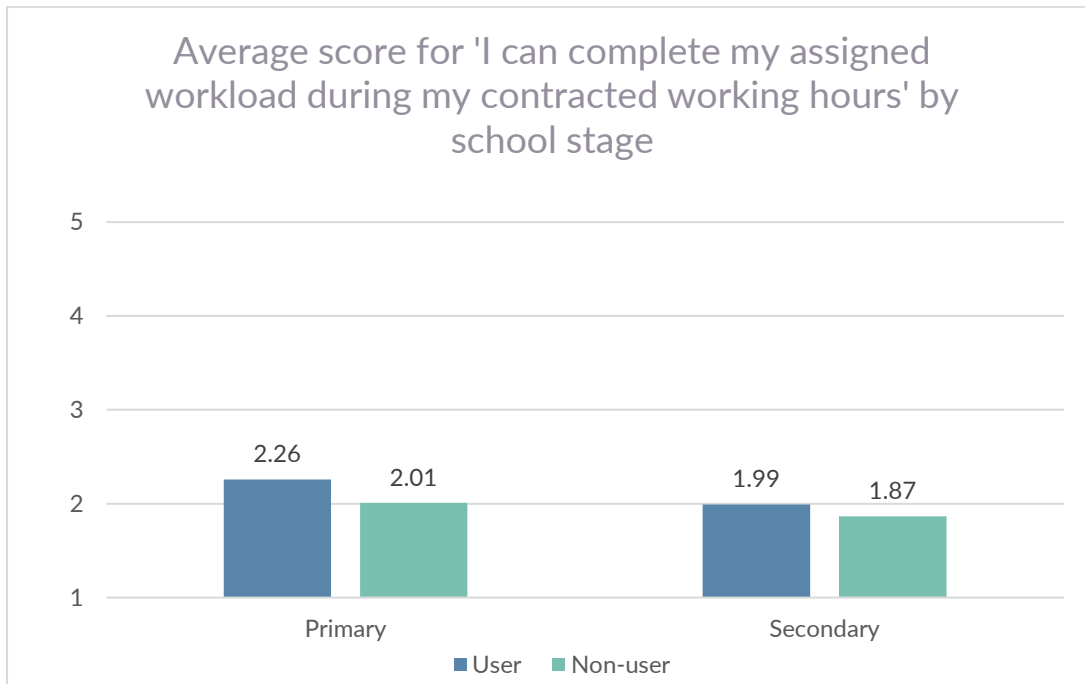


Figure 8: Mean responses to the statement 'I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours', response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users by school stage; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

Oak users were also more likely to report that they had an acceptable workload than non-users, with 24% of users agreeing with this statement (scores of 4 or 5 out of 5) compared to 20% of non-users (statistically significant difference). This showed a slight improvement on the 2023 figures where there was agreement for 20% of users compared to 18% of non-users. The non-user figure of 20% broadly aligned with the figure from national research reported in the Department for Education research 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'¹³ report where 17% agreed that their workload was acceptable giving some validity to these survey findings.

¹³ Department for Education, April 2023. ['Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'](#)

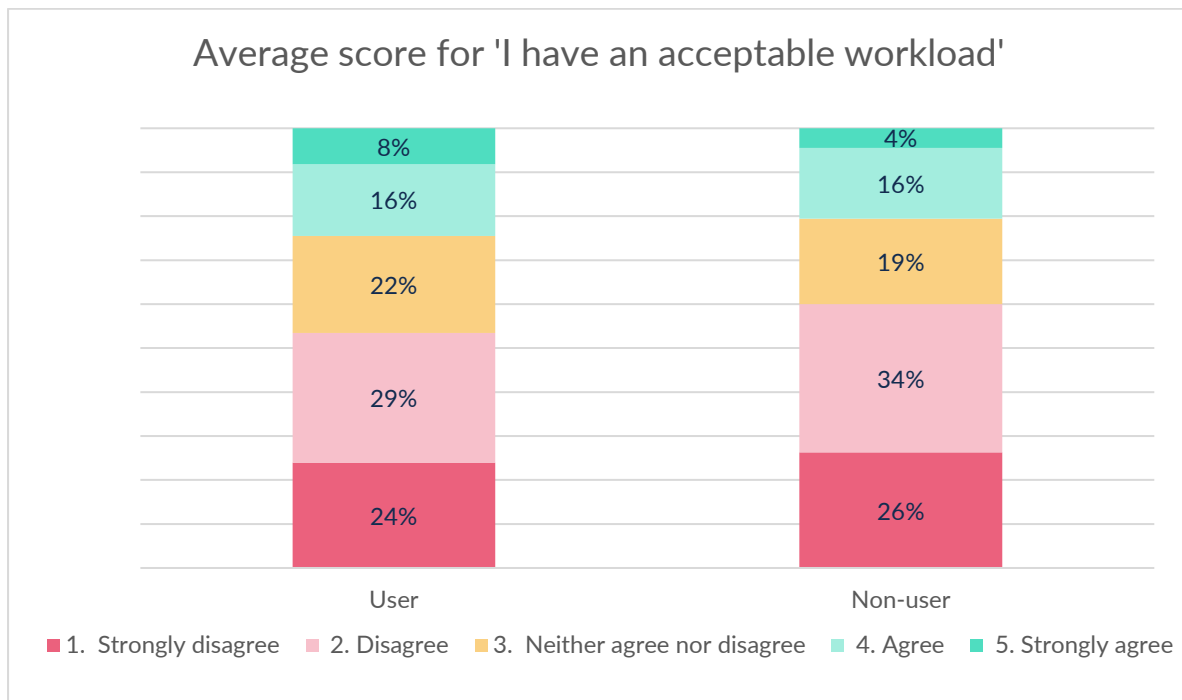


Figure 9: Responses to the statement 'I have an acceptable workload', response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

This difference between users and non-users was apparent across roles and was evident for Primary schools but not Secondary schools. It was also correlated with frequency of use with more frequent users more likely to agree than less frequent users: 36% for at least once a week users, 28% for a few times a month and 21% for non-users.

Frequency of use of Oak appears to be associated with more positive perceptions of workload, with those using Oak more frequently having more positive scores across the three statements. However, infrequent users (once a month or less) had less positive perceptions of workload compared to non-users, as depicted in the graph below.

Users who reported that using Oak had increased their workload commented that it had been time consuming learning a new system. This factor may apply to infrequent users and may explain why Oak users in these circumstances reported a heavier workload than non-users.

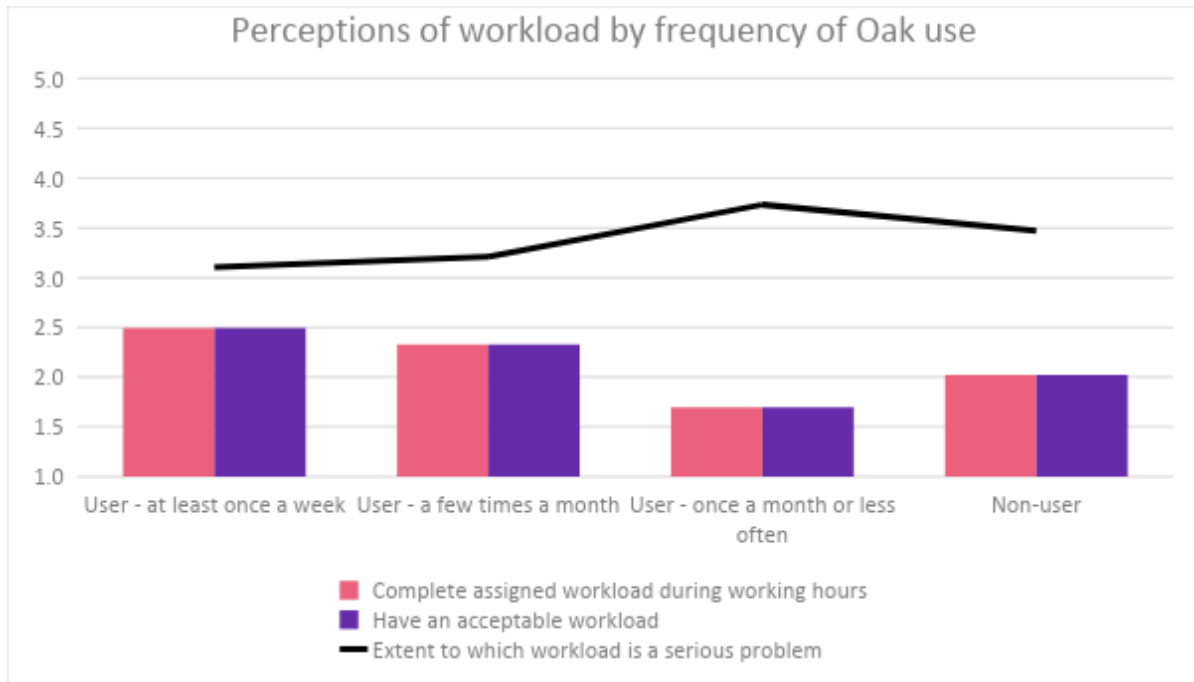


Figure 10: Responses to the three statements related to perceptions of workload comparing Oak users to non-users; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

Key finding: 73% of Oak users said that using Oak had had a positive impact on their workload, with 45% saying it had decreased their workload and 28% saying it had allowed them to repurpose their time for other useful activities.

Oak users were asked how using Oak affected their workload in the 2023/24 academic year. If respondents answered 'no impact' they were also asked if it had changed the proportion of their workload spent on activities of benefit to pupils. From the aggregated answers to these questions we found that **nearly three quarters of Oak users (73%) reported that using Oak had saved time**; 45% said this saved time had led to a decrease in workload and 28% said this saved time had been repurposed for other useful activities such as supporting pupils in class; 19% said using Oak had had no impact on workload nor saved time and 7% said that using Oak had increased workload.

Impact on time	
Positive (save time)	45%
Positive (repurpose existing time)	28%
No change	19%
Added Time	7%

} 73%

Table 1: Responses to questions asking the impact of using Oak on workload and follow-up question if 'no impact' answered, asking did using Oak change proportion of workload spent on activities that have greater benefit to pupils.

The impact on workload varied according to how Oak was used. The use of Oak decreased workload for more users for curriculum and lesson planning and lesson delivery (77%) than for 'extra-curricular' activities such as setting cover lessons (71%), setting homework (69%) and setting work for absent pupils (67%).

For those who said using Oak had decreased their workload, the **median time saving per week was 4 hours**. This time saving varied by the main way by which resources were used, with mainstream uses (curriculum planning, lesson planning and delivery) associated with 4.25-5 hours of saved time and 'emergency uses' (setting cover lessons and work for absent pupils) associated with 3 hours of saved time.

The time saved for Oak users also varied according to role. The highest time savings were for Support staff (6 hours), then Teachers (4 hours) and then Middle and Senior leaders (3 hours). Examining these results for full time and part time roles we found increased time savings for part time roles, with a median of 5.0 hours for full time staff, 5.3 hours for part time (0.5 FTE or more) and 6.0 hours for part time (less than 0.5 FTE).

More frequent users were more likely to report a decrease in workload: 78% of 'weekly or more often' users, 72% of 'a few times a month' users and 61% of 'once a month' users (Figure 11).

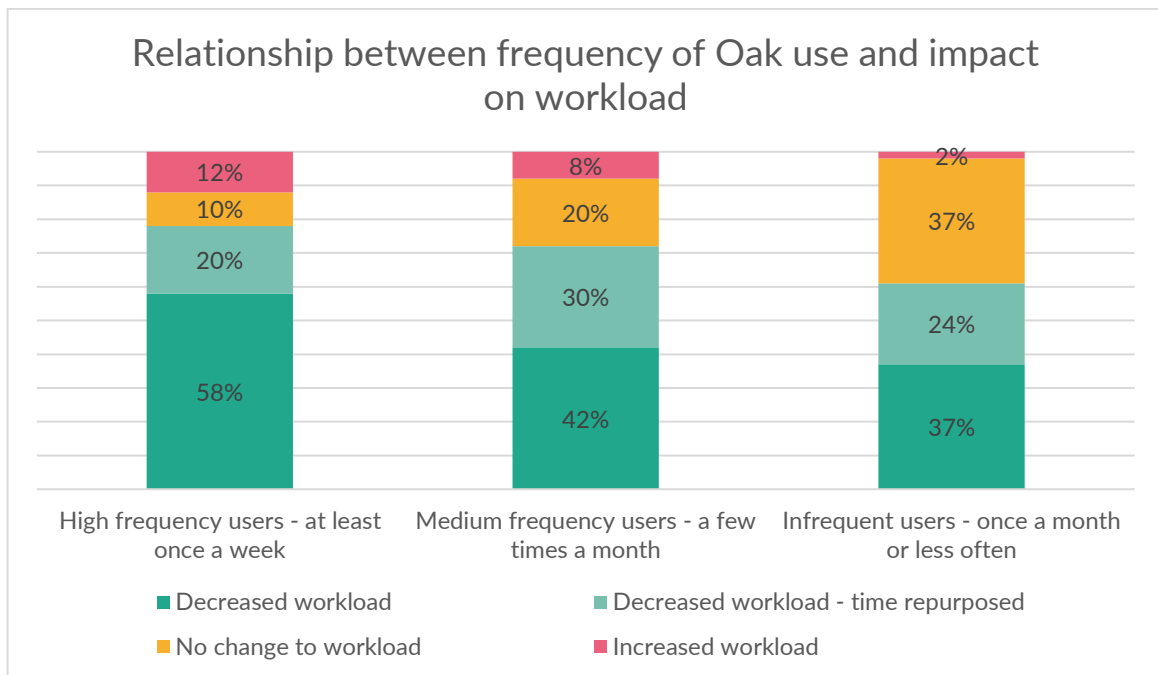


Figure 11: Responses to questions asking the impact of using Oak on workload and follow-up question if 'no impact' answered, asking did using Oak change proportion of workload spent on activities that have greater benefit to pupils; n=551.

For those who said using Oak had increased their workload, **the mean time reported was an increase of 5 hours per week**. This figure was lower for new users (starting 2023/24 academic year), 3 hours, and higher for older users (those who started using Oak before the 2023/24 academic year or during the pandemic) 6.5 and 5 respectively. Given that older users were more likely to use Oak for emergency use rather than for routine teaching purposes, this may be because older users associate Oak use with 'extra-curricular' activities such as setting cover lessons or setting work for absent pupils, activities that may be seen as additional to their regular workload. Overall, users who offered an explanation as to how Oak had increased their workload pointed to the time needed to learn a new system and the time needed to adapt materials.

Key finding: participants reported that using Oak had saved time by allowing them to efficiently access high quality resources.

In qualitative research, participants widely reported that using Oak had lessened their workload by giving them easy access to high quality resources. Participants discussed various ways in which Oak had played a role in reducing workload. A common theme highlighted by many participants was that Oak resources were high quality and easily accessible. Oak gave teachers a short cut to getting materials ready that would deliver high quality lessons. With limited effort teachers were able to address their particular teaching needs and save time and reduce stress in the process.

A Deputy Head of a primary school responsible for curriculum design explained how using Oak at her school had helped to ease the burden of teachers designing their own curriculum. She said, *"I think what has been huge is the reduction in workload. Using the Oak curriculum has lifted a huge cognitive load from teachers. And then having plans available for lesson delivery has been really appreciated as a way to get you started."*

Other participants highlighted that the quality of Oak resources meant that pupils would still be receiving a quality lesson even if a teacher was absent. A subject coordinator at a secondary school said *"I think the most impact for me was in the way it reduces the stress of setting cover. Because if you're not going to be there for a lesson, there's always that niggling worry that students are going to miss out on a quality lesson. Whereas if I know that I can at least deliver them some sort of quality cover then I've got a little bit of reassurance in there that I'm not sort of like abandoning them too much."*

Participants also linked the consistent high quality of Oak resources with reduced workload and reduced stress. A modern foreign languages teacher said *"It [Oak] was everything you needed it to be and... it was all that. I didn't have to check that the content was right... It was reliable and you knew what you were going to get."*

Impact on teacher wellbeing

Key finding: Wellbeing scores for Oak users were higher (meaning better wellbeing) than non-users (43.4 compared to 41.1).

We measured teacher wellbeing using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), a measure used to gauge the mental wellbeing of a population, where higher scores indicate more positive mental wellbeing and lower scores indicate less positive mental wellbeing.

On average, **Oak users had a wellbeing score of 43.4 compared to non-users' score of 41.1, suggesting that the mental wellbeing of Oak users was more positive than non-users**, a statistically significant difference. These scores were both slightly higher than average score of 38.4 reported in the 2024 Teacher Wellbeing Survey¹⁴.

Differences between users and non-users were consistent across primary and secondary phases and different roles, with a particularly large difference for Middle leader users compared to non-users. **Differences between users and non-users for all three types of job role were statistically significant.**

¹⁴ [2024 Teacher Wellbeing Survey report](#).

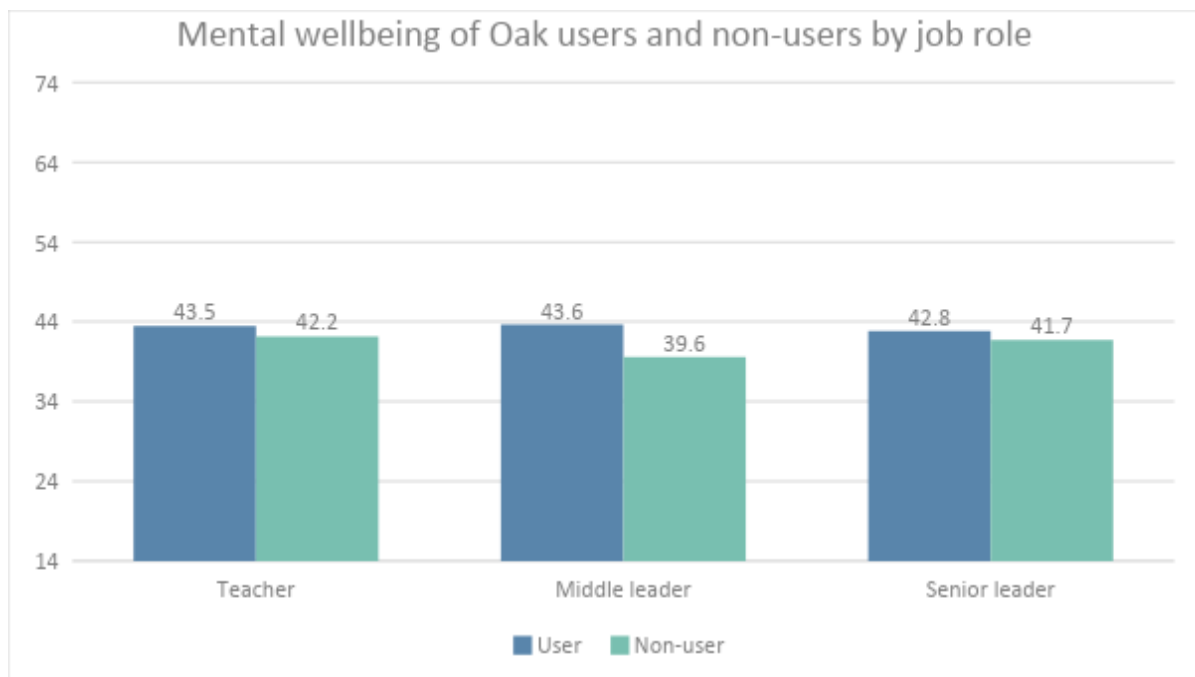


Figure 12: Mental wellbeing scores, using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, of Oak users and non-users, by job role; User n=380, Non-user n=380.

National benchmarks for teacher wellbeing using the WEMWBS were used from the Teacher Wellbeing Index¹⁵, with the latest score calculated from a survey of education staff conducted in 2023. **The Oak user score was very similar to the 2023 national survey score of 43.7 and the non-user score was lower.**

Key finding: Teachers using Oak were more likely to see themselves staying in teaching. Only 16% of Oak users didn't anticipate being in education in two years, compared to a quarter of teachers who didn't use Oak.

We asked survey respondents about their career plans in two years' time to use retention in the education sector as an indicator of workload and wellbeing. Although proportions of Oak users and non-users who anticipated being in the same role were similar (30% and 29% of respondents respectively after excluding those who said 'don't know'), **the proportion of Oak users who anticipated they would no longer be working in education was notably lower than non-users, 16% compared to 25%.** This was particularly true for Teachers and Middle leaders; 14% of user Teachers thought they would no longer be working education compared to 26% of non-user Teachers and 15% user Middle leaders compared to 25% non-users.

More Oak users anticipated they would be looking for promotion or changing role or setting but remaining in education (54%) than non-users (46%). The differences between users and non-users in relation to future career expectations were statistically significant.

¹⁵ Education Support, 2023. '[Teacher Wellbeing Index 2023](#)'

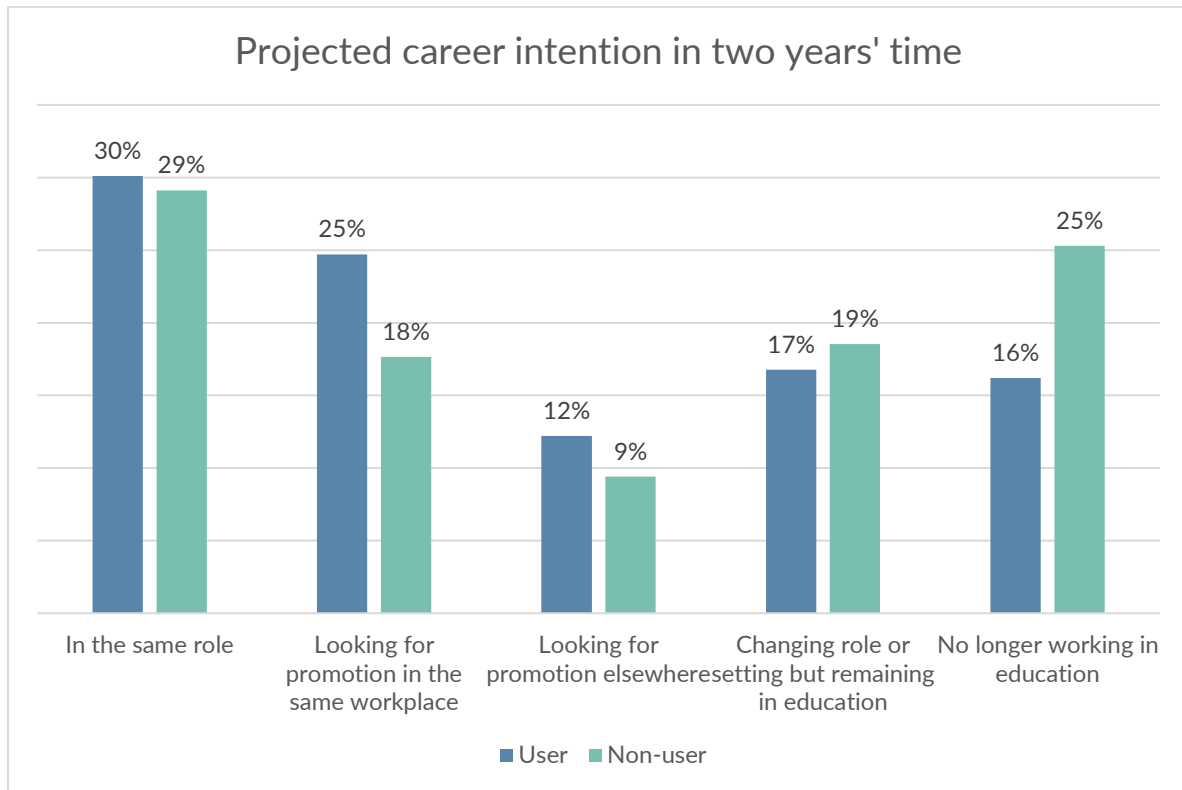


Figure 13: Responses to the question 'Where do you see yourself in two years' time?', with respondents able to select one of six options and 'don't know' responses excluded from the analysis, comparing Oak users (n=210) to non-users (n=130)

4. Impact on the sector

Key findings:

Oak curriculum and teaching resources were widely used and its positive impact was acknowledged by many users.

Two thirds of Oak users said they had used Oak to change their curriculum with 39% using it to add or swap topics, 22% to change the sequence of the curriculum and 6% using Oak as their main curriculum. Around 60% of users rated Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure and teacher resources as high quality with higher ratings from more frequent users.

Around half of users thought that Oak's curriculum and teaching resources had improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum.

Oak resources were widely used as a starting point for curriculum development with users adapting materials to meet the specific needs of their school.

71% of users said they had applied an Oak idea or model to their own teaching, with lesson structure and quiz questions the most frequently used.

Non-users typically explained why they had decided not to use Oak resources by saying they thought they were only suitable for emergency use or they already had lots of resources available to them.

Impact on curriculum, lesson design and teaching practice

Key finding: Oak curriculum resources were widely used and were most commonly used to adapt existing curricula with 61% of users using it in this way and 6% using the whole curriculum package as their main curriculum.

Oak users were asked about the most typical way that Oak's resources had impacted on their school's curriculum, focusing on the curricula they had been involved in making decisions about. Overall, 67% of users said they had used Oak in some way to change their curriculum. The most commonly reported use was swapping or adding certain lessons based on Oak's curricula (39%), followed by using Oak to change how their curriculum was sequenced (22%) and making Oak's curriculum had become their main curriculum sequence (6%). A third of users reported that Oak had not impact the curriculum at all.

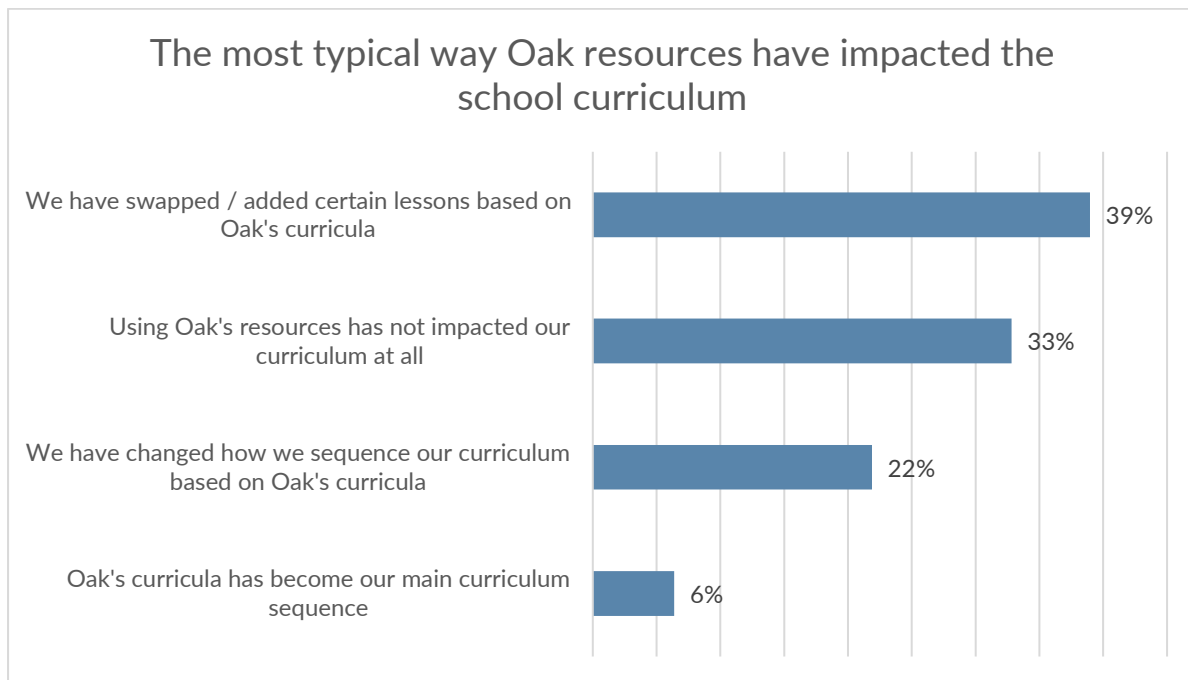


Figure 14: Responses to the question 'Thinking of the curricula you have been involved in making decisions about, what is the most typical way that Oak's resources have impacted on your school's curriculum?', with respondents able to select one of five options and 'don't know' responses excluded from the analysis (n=519)

Key finding: Around half of users reported that Oak's curriculum and resources had improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum.

Oak users were asked to respond to three statements about the impact of Oak's curriculum and resources on them as an individual or their school:

- ▶ Oak's curriculum and resources have improved the quality of my lesson planning and delivery (1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)
- ▶ Oak's curriculum and resources have increased my confidence in curriculum design (1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)
- ▶ Oak's curriculum and resources have improved our school's overall curriculum (1: Strongly disagree – 5: Strongly agree)

Responses to the first two statements were similar, with **just over half of users (52%) agreeing that Oak's curriculum and resources had improved the quality of their lesson planning and increased their confidence in curriculum design**. The proportion who agreed with the third statement was slightly smaller, with **just under half of users (45%) reporting that Oak's curriculum and resources had improved their school's overall curriculum**. Around a third gave neutral responses across the three statements and 15-18% thought the resources had not had this effect.

The results across these three statements were very similar to the results achieved from the same questions in 2023.

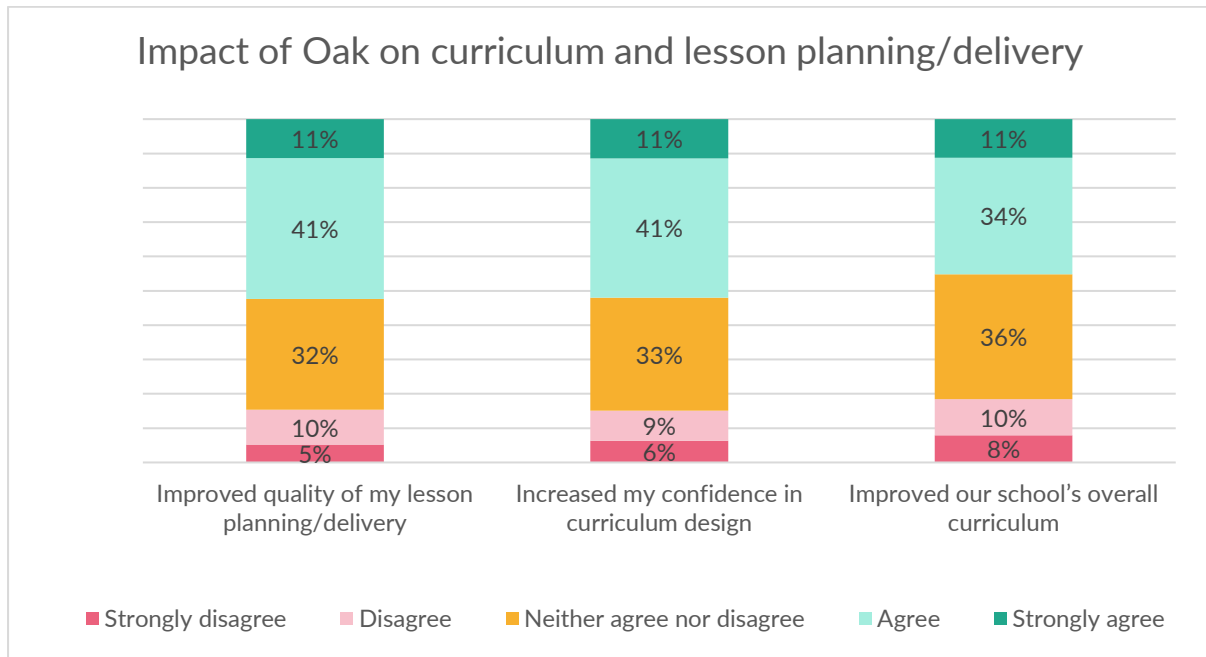


Figure 15: Oak users' responses to three statements about the impact of Oak's curriculum and resources on a scale from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, sample sizes for each statement as indicated; (n=540)

Key finding: More frequent Oak users were more likely to report beneficial impact on the curriculum and lesson planning and delivery.

Across all three statements, frequency of Oak use was associated with higher average scores, as depicted in the graph below. This provides a strong indication that regular engagement with Oak resources helps to maximise benefits. Conversely, infrequent and new users may experience challenges getting used to a new system and this may reduce benefits gained. This points to the importance of effective support and guidance for new and occasional users, which would help overcome this initial hurdle to fully realising the potential of using the resources.

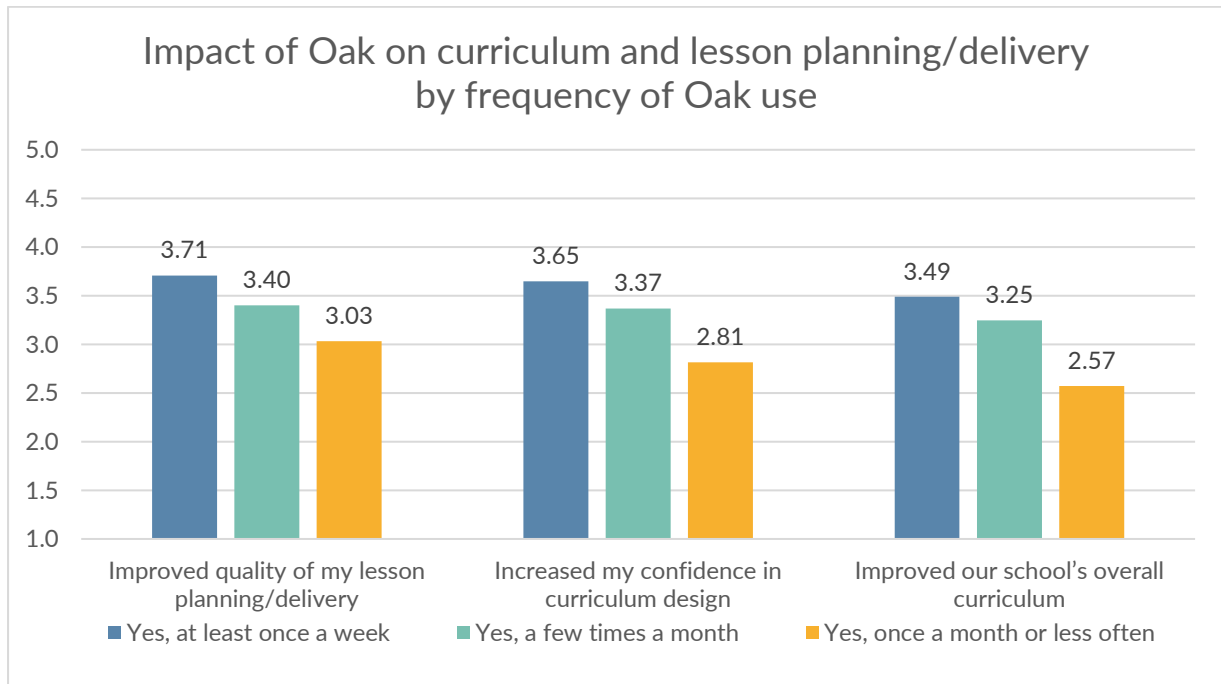


Figure 16: Oak users' responses to three statements about the impact of Oak's curriculum and resources on a scale from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, by frequency of Oak use; (n=540)

Case study: Geography and History, Roseview Primary School, Years 1 and 2

The senior leadership team at Roseview Primary School decided to redesign the curriculum for Geography and History teaching. The school was committed to using rigorous teaching methods including Rosenshine's principles of instruction and solo taxonomy and wanted the new curricula to include these. After conducting research, school leaders decided that Oak offered quality curricula for these subjects that embodied these principles and was therefore a good fit for the school.

The curriculum redesign went ahead with the school deciding to incorporate much of the Oak content into the new Geography and History curriculum. The leadership team felt that Oak was aligned with their overall vision for the curriculum and also offered user-friendly resources that were suitable for all of their pupils including those with SEND. The intention was to use Oak to create a high quality framework which teachers could adapt where needed.

Teachers welcomed the new Geography and History curricula when they were introduced reporting that it gave them a solid starting point and structure for teaching lessons. A Year 1 teacher talked about how he had used the Oak resources to prepare before teaching a lesson. Watching the videos helped him develop the subject knowledge and made him confident to deliver the lesson. Similarly, a Year 2 teacher commented on how the sequence of history lessons on Victorian Britain were well structured. As the teacher described, *"I really liked how the Oak resources put the Year 2 progression in place throughout...the lesson fitted in perfectly with what we were trying to do."*

Teachers also valued how the structure of Oak resources were aligned with the school's approach to assessing pupil progress. For example, the design of Oak's entry and exit lesson quizzes allowed teachers to continually assess the development of knowledge and plan next steps accordingly.

Year 1 and Year 2 pupils spoke positively of their recent lessons in history and geography. They were able to give examples of their learning in these subjects and said they had enjoyed the quizzes. Year 2 pupils were able to recall in some detail the causes of the Great Fire of London, with one saying *"all the houses went up in flames because the houses were next to each other and made of wood."* Year 1 pupils talked about a geography lesson where they were looking at different types of houses and were creating tally charts to record their answers. Pupils said their teachers had helped them in their lessons and were always available to answer questions. Overall, pupils reported that the lessons had been interesting and fun. As one pupil said, *"we made posters about the parts of the ocean and I really enjoyed this."*

Quality of the resources

Key finding: the majority of teachers (60%-63%) rated the quality of Oak's teacher resources and curriculum sequencing as high or very high.

In the 2023/24 academic year Oak started to release new teaching resources and curriculum sequences in five subjects (Maths, English, Science, History and Geography). The majority of these resources, however, were released in the final term. Therefore, across the year, a majority of the resources downloaded (69%) were resources initially created in 2020 in response to the pandemic.

Our findings on the quality of resources and curriculum sequencing do not distinguish between 'old' and 'new' resources and likely reflect that the majority of use was with the old resources. Any assessment of these findings should take this into account. We expect to see a clearer assessment of the quality of new resources and sequences in future years when these will make up the majority of what teachers interact with.

Oak users were asked to rate the quality of a) Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure, and b) Oak's teacher resources (e.g. slides, quizzes, worksheets) on a scale from 1: Very low to 5: Very high. A majority of users gave, 60%, gave a 'high' quality score ('high' or 'very high') for curriculum sequencing and structure and a 63% gave a 'high' score for teacher resources, as depicted in the chart below.

Quality scores increased with frequency of Oak usage, meaning those who used Oak more often were likely to have more positive perceptions of quality than those who used Oak less often. New users (those that had started using Oak in the 2023/24 academic year) reported a slightly higher average score than older users (who started prior to 2023/24 academic year): 3.87 compared to 3.59. This difference may reflect the perception of new Oak resources in five subject areas which were launched in the 2023/24 academic year.

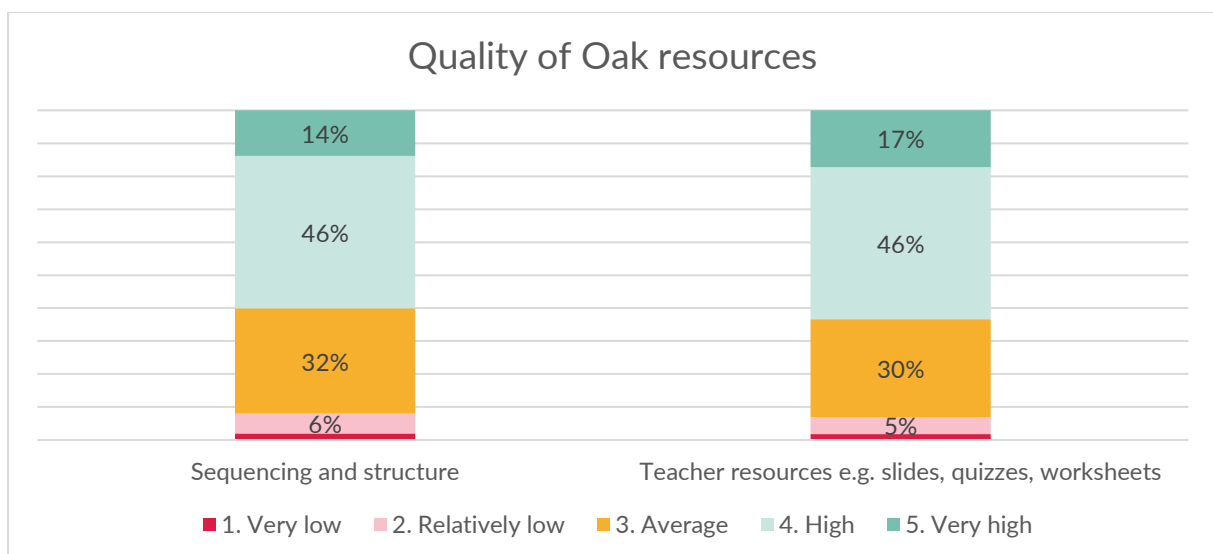


Figure 17: Oak users' rating of the sequencing and structure of curriculum resources and the quality of teacher resources on a scale from 1: Very low to 5: Very high; (n=551)

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of teachers who used Oak said they had applied an idea or model from Oak into their own teaching. A range of elements had been adopted, the most common being Oak's lesson structure (selected by 24%), as depicted in Figure 18.

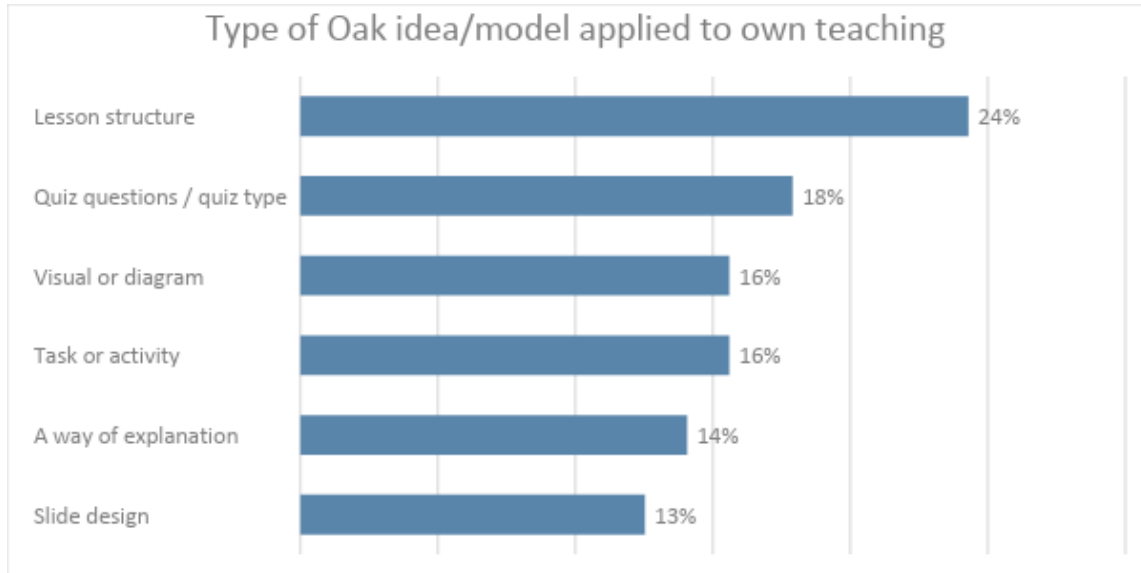


Figure 18: The type of resource that Oak users had applied to their own teaching; (n=391)

Key finding: Oak resources were often used as a starting point for curriculum development with users adapting materials to meet the specific needs of their school.


A typical use case for Oak curriculum resources was for these to be used as a starting point and adapted according to particular needs. The resources were seen as good quality and inspired the use of different strategies and activities. Practitioners then used the Oak materials to craft a bespoke curriculum that met the individual needs of their cohorts. This process of starting with an Oak framework which was then adapted by practitioners was widely considered valuable. As a secondary Science specialist said, "I would always visit Oak if I was stuck for inspiration, I found it was a good baseline to start with and the way they do things made me think differently about my own lessons and resources." A Head of English at a secondary school echoed this sentiment saying, "using Oak as a framework for the curriculum ensures we have a quality starting point, but it also allows for teacher autonomy. Teachers can make their own adaptations, but the Oak framework ensures we have consistent quality."

Key finding: Oak was often used as a professional development tool supporting teachers covering multiple subjects (e.g. in primary schools) and non-subject specialists, including those covering lessons.


In qualitative research, senior leaders discussed how they felt Oak resources were particularly useful as a CPD tool for ECT or trainee teachers. They thought the resources were of a high enough quality that they would support ECTs in their training and that this would have a positive impact on their classroom practice and lesson design. This stance was caveated with the point that it should not be used in isolation but in conjunction with structured support to ensure long lasting impact.

In one focus group leaders talked about how the language and delivery of the new resources made them very valuable resources for PGCE students. Again, especially when these students were non-specialists, they could watch the videos and really understand the terminology required for the lesson and enable them to teach it properly. One teacher talked about how in their school, they had several different non-specialist teachers delivering art lesson, so they regularly direct them toward Oak to provide guidance.

In one focus group, a Head of English said:

 *Within my department there was a new class teacher who used it [Oak] more and more to support their development. They found the structure of the Oak lessons really helped them develop their own practice, for example in Year 9 narrative writing. As a result they have led the department in using this as a model for next year."*

In another example, an ECT student described how the structure and simplicity of the Oak lesson plan made it easy for their pupils to understand. She explained:

 *I was teaching an extract from 'Midsummer's Night's Dream' and they were just not getting it. I put the Oak resources in a worksheet I had created to try and help and it just immediately clicked for them."*

Most secondary participants felt that one of the biggest areas of impact was on non-specialist teachers. Throughout all focus groups the issue of staff recruitment and retention was discussed and it was felt that due to these challenges Oak resources were helping to provide a level of consistency for pupils which teachers fear they would not be able to do without. For non-subject specialist teachers some of the content, particularly in KS3 and 4, is complex and so it was felt that the quality of Oak resources helped to bridge the gap between these teachers and their specialist subject knowledge.

One Science teacher explained that as a chemist his knowledge of biology and physics was more limited but the school was still asking him to deliver these lessons. He highlighted a lesson on cell specialisation which he felt he would not have been able to do without using Oak. Using these resources helped to enhance his subject knowledge and deliver the content effectively to his students. He added that because of his increased confidence in this area the pupils responded very well and were fully engaged in the lesson.

Key finding: The most frequently stated reasons for not using Oak resources were already having lots of resources and thinking that Oak resources were only suitable for emergency use.

Those who had not used Oak this year but had heard of Oak were asked why they chose not to use Oak resources. The most frequently stated reasons that school staff did not use Oak resources were that **Oak resources were suitable for emergency use only and that they already had lots of resources**; around a quarter of non-users selected each. The results for these two reasons were very similar to 2023 but the one significant change was an increase from 4% to 24% for 'the offered curriculum is not aligned to our curriculum'. It is worth noting that this assessment of Oak resources is likely to have been based on knowledge of Oak's old content made during the pandemic, much of which started to be replaced in the recent 2023/24 academic year.

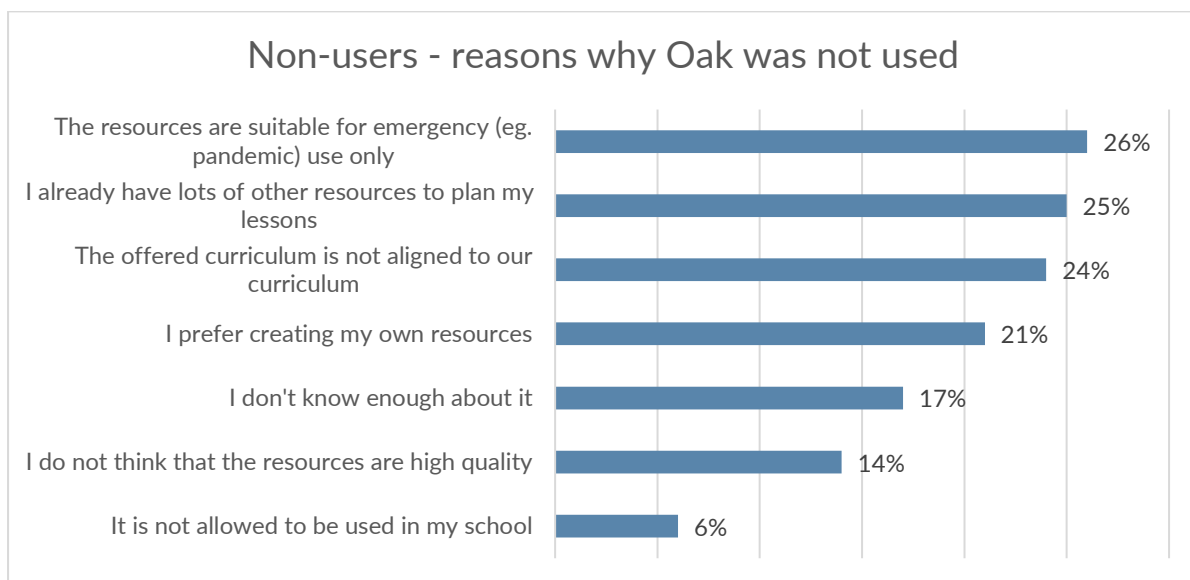


Figure 19: Reasons selected by non-Oak users in the current academic year 2023/24 who had heard of Oak previously as to why they chose not to use Oak resources, multiple choice selection (n=453)

When examining differences between respondents who didn't use Oak between primary and secondary schools, primary school respondents were more likely to think that the resources were suitable for emergency use only, that they already had lots of other resources, or that Oak was not aligned to their curriculum. In comparison, for secondary school users the main

barriers were that Oak was not aligned to their curriculum and that they had access to other resources to plan lessons.

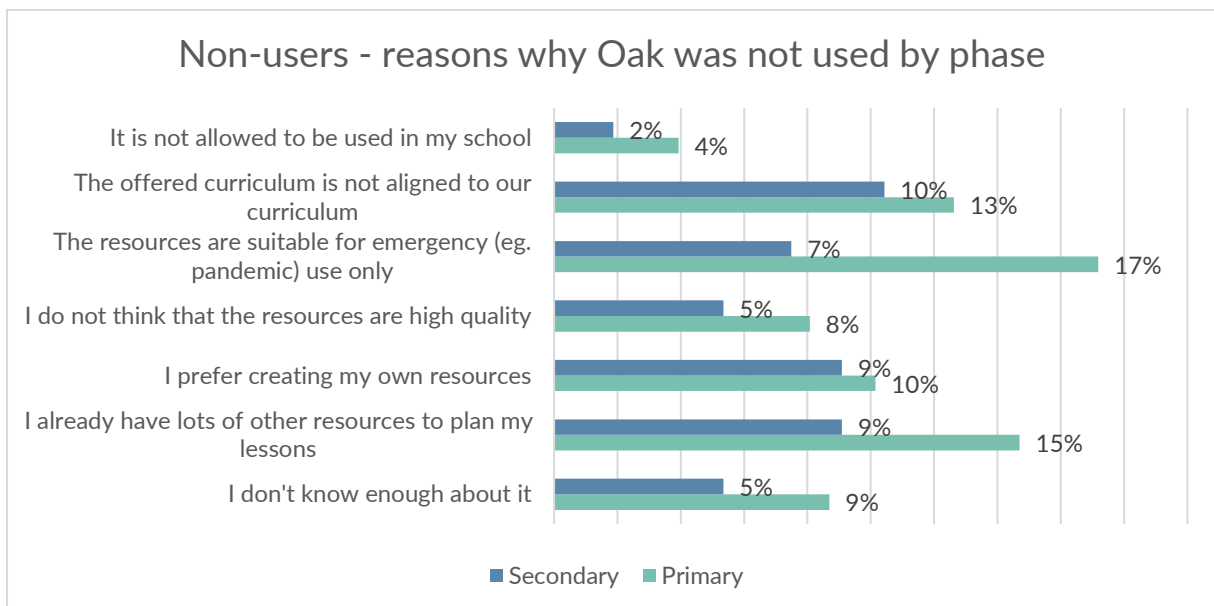


Figure 20: Reasons selected by non-Oak users in the current academic year 2022/23 who had heard of Oak previously as to why they chose not to use Oak resources, multiple choice selection, comparing primary respondents (n=177) to secondary respondents (n=186)

Respondents who gave 'I do not think that the resources are high quality' or 'the offered curriculum is not aligned to our curriculum' as an explanation for not using Oak were asked to explain how they thought the resources could be improved. Among the changes suggested were making resources more aligned to exam boards and the national curriculum, improving coverage of full range of content and making lessons more engaging and interesting for pupils. As with other questions, this assessment of Oak resources is likely to have been based on knowledge of Oak's old content much of which started to be replaced in the recent 2023/24 academic year.

Non-users offered suggestions as to how Oak resources could be made more attractive. Common themes highlighted were curriculum alignment and content coverage, improved quality and engagement of resources. One teacher said "align it more closely to new GCSE specification with vocab list for MFL. Make lessons more challenging for grammar school/stream students." Also suggesting some changes, another teacher said, "more choice of topics and themes so schools could choose a pathway suited to their pupils. More fun elements as you would have in a lesson such as starters, use of songs and games etc to make it more engaging."

5. Impact on pupils

Key findings:

Oak users and non-users reported no significant difference on the perception of their pupils' academic performance with similar estimates from both groups on the proportion of pupils behind and exceeding expectations.

Teachers widely felt that Oak was valuable for 'emergency' circumstances such as cover, sickness and exclusions and helped to minimise learning gaps for pupils in these circumstances.

Teachers were positive about the benefits of using Oak resources with SEND and EAL pupils highlighting its user-friendly structure and accessibility.

Academic performance

Key finding: Oak users and non-users reported no significant difference on the perception of their pupils' academic performance.

Survey respondents were asked one question on their perception of what percentage of their pupils were behind expectations and another on their perception of what percentage of their pupils were exceeding expectations. The responses of Oak users and non-users were compared (using matched groups) to identify any differences in perceptions of pupils' academic performance that can be associated with using Oak.

Survey respondents were able to input any value between 1 to 100% for both questions; their responses were also then grouped into intervals (0-9%, 10-19%, 20-29%, 30-39%, 40-49%, 50% or more).

The results showed no significant difference on the perception of their pupils' academic performance between Oak users and non-users, as demonstrated in the graph below. Users and non-users reported on average that 18% of their pupils were exceeding expectations. For the proportion of pupils below expectations, where a lower proportion is more positive, users reported on average that 32% of their pupils were working behind expectations compared to 33% for non-users. This difference was not statistically significant.

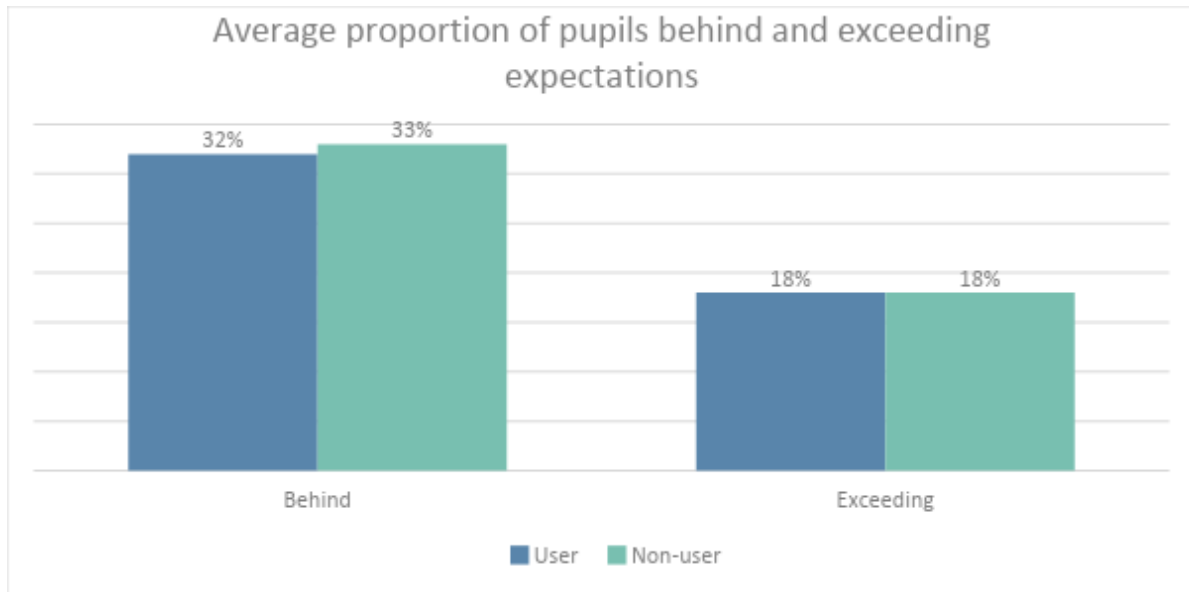
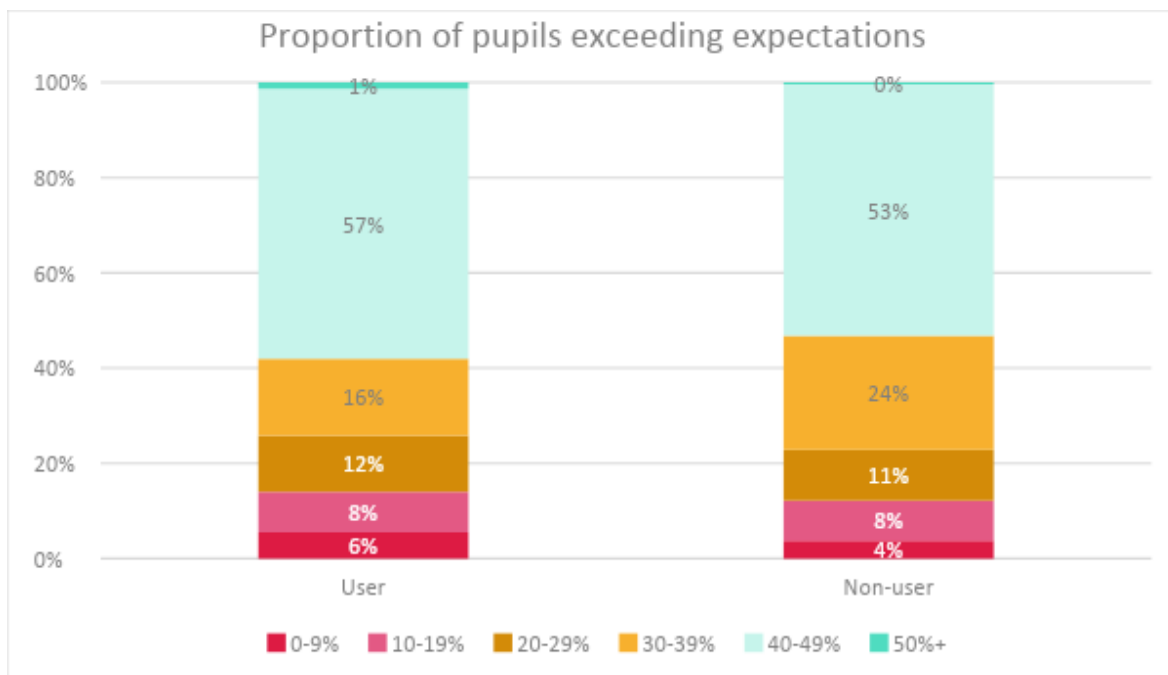
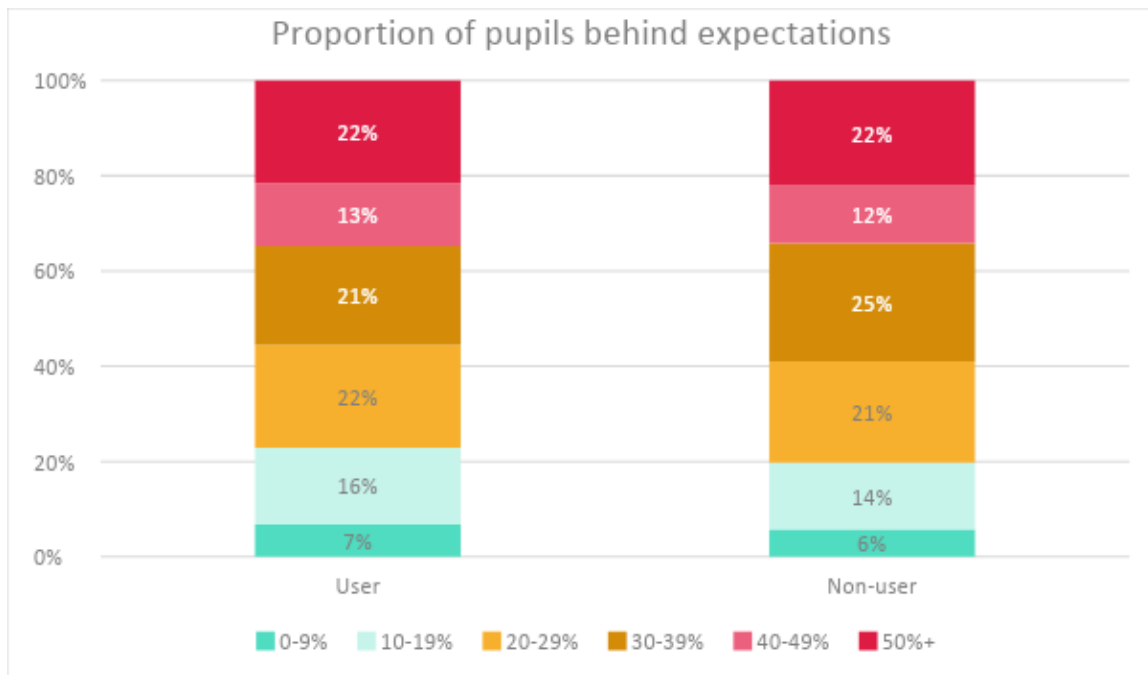


Figure 21: Mean proportion of pupils that matched Oak users and non-users reported as being behind and exceeding expectations; User n=236, non-User n=263

The similarity in results for user and non-users was also apparent when the results were aggregated into bands. The number of respondents who reported under a fifth of their pupils as behind expectations was 23% for users and 20% for non-users. And the number of respondents who reported 40% or more of pupils as exceeding expectations was 58% for users and 53% for non-users. Further details are in Figures 22 and 23 below.



Figures 22 & 23: Proportion of pupils that matched Oak users and non-users reported as being behind and exceeding expectations, grouped into intervals; User n=236, non-User n=263

Case study: Citizenship and history, Fieldway Secondary School, Years 8-10

Fieldway Secondary School had started using Oak curricula for History and Citizenship in the current 2023/24 academic year. The department head had chosen Oak for these subjects primarily because of its structured approach to learning and its ability to track pupil progress through continual assessment. These features were considered key to supporting effective learning and preparing pupils for GCSE exams.

Teachers who delivered lessons to pupils in these subjects were strongly supportive of the use of Oak. One teacher commented how the Oak citizenship curriculum carefully structured learning by progressively building on concepts. For example, pupils began learning about citizenship in local areas and then applied these ideas to an international context. The learning through small and linked steps embodied in the Oak curriculum was considered an effective way of developing knowledge and building pupil confidence. The teacher also highlighted how pupils had found the Oak lesson content engaging and stimulating and this had helped to enhance their learning experience. For example, pupils were reported to have particularly enjoyed the real-life case studies in Citizenship lessons.

In addition to delivering an effective learning experience, use of the Oak curriculum also significantly reduced workload for the department. The ready-made lesson plans and resources meant it was straightforward to cover a class when a member of staff was absent. The quality of these materials and their ease of use ensured that pupils continued to receive effective learning even when there were unforeseen staff absences.

Years 8, 9 and 10 pupils were familiar with the Citizenship and History lessons that used Oak and were able to compare these lessons to those that did not use Oak. They spoke positively of Oak lessons in these subjects saying the lessons were clearly presented and engaging. For example, pupils described how the presentation for a lesson on finance in Citizenship had been “straightforward, simple and clear” and this had helped them to understand the concept. Year 8 pupils talked about the Citizenship lessons they had had on cyber security and said they had enjoyed the interactive nature of the lessons, and this had helped them engage with the topic. Another group of pupils praised the structure and simplicity of a lesson on political parties which they said had left them with a clear understanding of their different visions.

When comparing Oak lessons with non-Oak lessons, pupils highlighted the value of the manageable steps and clear explanation provided by Oak. They referred to a Year 7 History lesson on slavery which they particularly enjoyed and found easy to follow because of this structure. Another pupil talked about their Islamic history lessons which were made simpler by being broken down into clear parts. By comparison, these pupils found non-Oak history lessons less structured and harder to follow.

Those pupils who were preparing for GCSE stated that they used Oak resources regularly for revision because they provided exam style questions that matched the content they had learned at school. Talking about the Oak question bank in History, one pupil said, “it really helped me gain the knowledge I needed to answer exam questions.”

Key finding: Teachers widely felt that Oak was valuable for ‘emergency’ circumstances such as cover, sickness and exclusions and helped to minimise learning gaps for pupils in these circumstances.

Participants in focus groups described how Oak resources were used to support teachers covering lessons, often due to problems recruiting specialist teachers. Participants felt that while the sector continues to face recruitment challenges, the availability of Oak resources meant they could deliver high quality lessons and cover key content in line with the school’s curriculum and exam board expectations. Participants felt that, more generally, if non-specialist teachers were expected to deliver specialist lessons this could lead to misconceptions and knowledge gaps which long term can affect pupil outcomes, but participants trusted that the quality of Oak videos, resources and assessment quizzes meant that even without specialist teachers, pupils were still achieving their full potential.

A Science teacher in a secondary school reported that Oak had provided a valuable stopgap when the department had been short of specialist teachers. He said, "Oak provided access to specialist knowledge even when a science specialist was not physically present."

A Science specialist talked about two GCSE pupils who were excluded from school and as a result could miss out on practical science learning. Although he felt Oak resources could not substitute for in-person learning, he felt that the Oak videos and content really helped them avoid missing important learning opportunities and helped to consolidate their learning while they were excluded. A secondary Science teacher talked about a pupil who attended a football academy so missed large amounts of school. But by using Oak he was able to access the learning online.

Many participants talked about how Oak resources had allowed them to successfully manage cover lessons when staff were absent. A subject coordinator for history at a secondary school talking about using Oak for cover lessons said its quality ensured a consistent educational experience for pupils. She said "to keep the specialist in the room with the children is a lot more effective way to set good cover so that they're actually getting some proper content..."

Case study: Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), Hilltop Primary School, Key Stage 2

Hilltop Primary School faced a challenging situation three years ago when their long-term language specialist left the school. The Headteacher wanted to continue teaching a modern foreign language (MFL) at the school but would have to do so without specialist language teachers. After research on their options, school leaders decided to use the Oak curriculum to deliver French lessons to Key Stage 2 pupils. Oak was felt to offer a quality product that offered ready-to-use lessons that non-language specialist teachers could easily use.

Teachers who had delivered French lessons using the new curriculum spoke of the benefits of using Oak. They described how the structure of Oak lessons, using repetition and quizzes at beginning and end, had helped to embed pupils' learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge developed with each lesson leading to more effective command of the language. The Headteacher, said that this was particularly evident in the development of French writing skills in Year 6 which was "vastly superior than anything they have done before."

Teachers also highlighted that lesson resources were easy to use and could be readily adapted if needed. They really liked the fact that vocabulary in the Oak resources was colour coded for masculine and feminine and this consistency allowed pupils to efficiently access learning. Teachers also thought that the accessibility of resources for SEND pupils was a particular advantage. They spoke about how pupils with SEND in their class had responded well to the videos and developed a strength in French which had brought them in line with their peers; "One child actually excelled in French; this was the first time, and it was such a positive experience not just for him but for the other children to see."

Overall, teachers welcomed the use of the Oak curriculum to teach French. They were agreed that it's introduction had reduced their workload significantly and made the ongoing teaching of MFL at the school sustainable. As a teacher explained, "without the Oak curriculum, French would have been the first subject to be dropped and teachers would have started complaining, not because they didn't want to teach it but because they were not confident and didn't know where to start."

Pupils spoke warmly of their French lessons at school. They said they had found the classes fun and had made progress learning the language. Pupils described the distinctive format of French lessons and how it helped them to learn. They described how hearing real French speakers in the videos had helped them pronounce words. A Year 4 pupil said, "I really liked the videos and the sheets. I answered the questions and it helped me remember the vocab and new words." Similarly, a Year 6 pupil said "I liked the quizzes, they helped me remember what I learned the lesson previously." Overall, pupils were positive about their French lessons and reported the lessons had been fun and they had made progress with the language.

Special Educational Needs and EAL pupils

Key finding: Teachers were positive about the benefits of using Oak resources with SEND and EAL pupils but also highlighted areas for improvement.

Participants discussed the positive impact Oak resources were having on pupils with SEND or who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) reporting that the visual nature and broken down, manageable structure made the lessons accessible for these pupils. One participant who worked as an online teacher for pupils with SEND spoke of their positive experience using Oak resources for special needs education online, particularly in history and science, while citing a lack of adequate resources for geography and music at Key Stage 4. She said, "I taught 14 SEN pupils during Covid and they would not have been able to access mainstream lessons without the addition of Oak resources." They commended the platform for its ease of use and navigability. They spoke about an excluded GCSE student who had benefited from the video explanations in science. Others stated that despite the appreciation for Oak's foundational support, there was a lack of SEND specific resources, issues with age-appropriateness, and the need for greater visual engagement.

In another focus group the participants talked about the repetition of key words and how this has impacted learners with SEND and helped them read more confidently and access the learning better. One Science teacher referenced a lesson on reflection and light and that the way it was explained "was so clear and well pitched that it was very easy for my SEND pupils to access it."

One English secondary school teacher talked about the challenges she had had engaging a particularly vulnerable pupil. But since she had began using Oak quizzes and multiple choice resources she had noticed a significant change in this pupil's engagement. She explained, "*for the first time I saw little snippets of them being interested and engaging with the lesson. They wrote a whole paragraph for the first time which was such an achievement!*"

Participants reported that they would often use Oak alongside other resources but stated they would often go to Oak first because it is free and because they believed it had a positive effect on pupil engagement for SEN or EAL pupils because of the visual aspect of the resources.

In another focus group participants talked about the impact this repetition was having on EAL learners, particularly those who had joined from the Ukraine and needed rapid catch up to stay in line with their peers.

One teacher who worked in a specialist nurture setting where pupils were unlikely to return to mainstream school stated that she had used the resources more consistently in the last two years because she was surprised at how well her pupils responded to the structure of the resources during Covid-19 related school closures.

She worked in a very small school where behaviour was often very poor and they had found that the ability to stop and start lessons to give pupils breaks had been really beneficial. She stated that she was surprised at how well pupils had responded to this structured style of learning. Furthermore, the ease with which teachers could download and absorb the content of the lessons had had a positive impact on their workload and wellbeing. For these reasons, they have continued to use the resources and now use them more than they did in periods of school closures.

6. Conclusion

Summary of findings

Transition in use

The use of Oak resources in schools is going through a period of transition. While Oak started as primarily an emergency resource supporting remote learning, since the pandemic it has developed as a mainstream teaching resource supporting curriculum and lesson planning and classroom lesson delivery. The development of new curriculum and lesson resources by Oak has led to a broader understanding of its purpose and new patterns of use. Whereas previously Oak was often associated by teachers with 'emergency' activities and non-classroom learning e.g. setting work for absent pupils, setting cover lessons and homework, the resource has increasingly become known as a mainstream teaching resource. Alongside this change of perception has been a change in use with Oak used less for 'emergency' purposes and more for curriculum planning and lesson planning and delivery. Compared to the previous year, users in the 2023/24 academic year reported using Oak for emergency activities and homework less and more for lesson planning and lesson delivery. Using Oak for lesson planning and delivery was reported as a main form of use for 40% of users in 2024 compared to 33% in 2023. Conversely, using Oak for 'emergency' activities (cover lessons and work for absent students) was down from 42% in 2023 to 40% in 2024.

There is evidence the change in use of Oak has been driven by a growth in new users. For example, new users were much more likely to be using Oak for lesson planning and delivery than users who started using Oak during the pandemic. Among users that started using Oak in 2023/24 a quarter reported using it for 'emergency' activities compared to 72% of users who starting using Oak during the pandemic. Conversely, 'old' users who started during the pandemic were less likely to be using Oak for lesson planning; 60% of new users report using Oak for lesson planning compared to 45% of users who started during the pandemic. While differences between 'old' and 'new' users remain, there is some evidence that over time users are broadening their use of Oak resources. Overall, Oak has experienced significant growth, with a 115% increase in users from February 24th to July 24th, 2024, compared to the same period the previous year.

Impact on teachers

The evaluation investigated the impact of using Oak by asking users the impact of using Oak on their workload. Evidence suggested a largely positive picture with most users reporting that using Oak had saved time. Nearly three quarters of users (73%) reported that using Oak had saved time with 45% reporting this saved time had led to a decrease in workload and 28% saying this saved time had been repurposed for other useful activities such as supporting pupils in class. The typical time saved in a week for these users was four hours. Of the remaining users, 19% said using Oak had had no impact on workload. A small proportion

of users (7%) reported that Oak had led to an increased workload and this was usually attributed to the effort involved in learning a new system.

The evaluation found a range of other evidence that suggested Oak users felt their workload was less and that it was more manageable for themselves and for staff at their school more widely. Oak users perceived they had less workload than their non-user counterparts and reported they were working almost five hours less than non-Oak users. This difference was consistent across different roles (Teacher, Middle leader and Senior leader) and average hours were lower for more frequent Oak users. Consistent with a perception of less workload, Oak users were also more likely to report being able to complete their assigned workload during contracted working hours and that they had an acceptable workload. These findings indicate a strong correlation between use of Oak and a perception of a lower workload: Oak users felt they worked less than non-users and this feeling was stronger the more frequently they used the resource.

Evidence on wellbeing and future career plans corroborated these differences on perceptions of workload. Education research indicates that teacher wellbeing and staff retention is closely related to perceptions of workload. Accordingly, we found that Oak users had a better wellbeing score than non-users and were less likely to think they would no longer be working in education in two years' time.

Quality and impact of Oak resources

Users were broadly positive about the quality of Oak resources and had used them in a variety of ways ranging from supplementing existing resources to using it as a core resource. In terms of using Oak to support teaching practice, most users indicated that they used Oak to supplement or adapt existing materials most users felt that using Oak resources had improved key aspects of their teaching practice, with 52% reporting that they had improved the quality of their lesson planning and increased their confidence in curriculum design. More frequent users were more likely to make this positive assessment with weekly users much more likely to report benefits than occasional users.

Users generally felt key aspects of Oak resources were of a high quality. For example, 60% of users considered the 'curriculum sequencing and structure' of Oak resources to be high quality and 63% for teacher resources. This score was slightly improved for teacher resources compared to last year, which could be attributable to the impact of new resources starting to be released this academic year.

Why non-users choose not to use Oak

A number of reasons were offered as to why non-users had chosen not to use Oak including the availability of other resources and its non-alignment to the school's curriculum. But there were also signs that the lingering association of Oak with emergency use continued to act as a significant barrier to take up, particularly for primary schools.



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