ImpactEd

Oak National Academy

2022/23 Evaluation Report

August 2023

Contents

Executive Summary

Oak National Academy was set up in April 2020 as an emergency response to school closures during the pandemic. During this time, 58% of all teachers used Oak's resources and on their peak week 2.5 million pupils accessed Oak lessons. Once schools reopened in March 2021, Oak saw a change in how teachers use their resources, with a shift from remote to in-class use, using Oak mostly for curriculum and lesson planning and delivery. Oak's 8,000 resources are available for free, across most subjects from EYFS to Year 11, with over 90% of lessons having downloadable quizzes, slides and worksheets. Teachers can access these downloadable resources via the Teacher Hub, while pupils can access lessons via the Classroom.

In September 2022, Oak became an Arm's Length Body, and while their core outcome areas have not changed, they shifted focus to providing free, adaptable and high-quality resources suitable for in-class use, beyond remote learning. At this point, with the end of licencing agreements with some partners, a number of lessons and resources were taken down from the platform. This reduction in resources is important to consider and makes direct comparisons with previous years challenging. Oak will start releasing new lesson resources starting in Autumn 2023 in six subjects to start with (English, maths, science, geography, history and music), these will be specifically designed to support in-class use.

Oak National Academy partnered with ImpactEd to understand the impact that Oak National Academy had throughout the 2022/23 academic year. This independent evaluation focused on impact across three outcome areas – teachers, pupils, and the education sector – through its use both in the classroom and for remote learning.

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

- A quantitative survey with 1,302 participants, targeted at both Oak and non-Oak users to compare between the two groups to investigate the potential impact of Oak National Academy on pupils' academic performance, teachers' workload and teachers' wellbeing, 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 focus groups (6) and interviews (6) with a total of 28 participants to explore impact and gain better insights into the implementation of Oak resources in schools
- 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

1. In the 2022/23 academic year, teachers downloaded a total of 1.13m resources and 9.6m lessons were taken by pupils through Oak National Academy, with an average of 102k pupils and 30k teachers using the site each week (excluding school holidays).
2. 93% of teachers are aware of Oak and 25% of teachers used Oak this year based on a Teacher Tapp survey. Outside of a weekly cycle of Oak use, there were large spikes in Oak usage coinciding with teacher strikes this academic year.
3. Oak is used across all school types in England, but is more heavily used in secondary schools than primary schools (61.4% of secondary schools compared to 30.3% of primary) and state schools (37%) than independent schools (31.2%). Oak continues to be more frequently used in more disadvantaged areas, and Maths and English are the most used subjects.
4. 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 in alignment with Oak's intention as a provision backstop to minimise disruption. Use of Oak as a professional development tool to support and develop knowledge of subject content was also discussed in qualitative focus groups.

Impact on teachers

1. Oak users reported working a mean of 31.5 hours compared to 42 hours a week for non-users – a difference that was statistically significant.[1] The benefits were most notable for those who use Oak a few times a month or more and for senior leaders.
2. Oak users were less likely to consider teacher workload a serious problem in their school than non-users to a statistically significant degree; primary school Oak users consider teacher workload to be a more serious problem than secondary school users. 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 than non-users to a statistically significant degree.
3. 40% of Oak users said that using Oak had decreased their workload with an average time saved of 4 hours per week, 54% said that using Oak had not impacted their workload and the remaining 6% said using Oak had increased their workload (with an average of 7 hours per week added). In qualitative research, participants reported using time saved through using Oak on feedback, assessment and supporting pupils directly instead.
4. Wellbeing scores for Oak users were higher (meaning better wellbeing) than non-users (43.76 compared to 40.65), a difference which was statistically significant. The proportion

[1] It is not possible to compare this data to national benchmarks due to differences in the methodology related to full/part time working.

of Oak users who anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time was notably lower than non-users – 9% compared to 29% - and also compared favourably to a national benchmark where 16% of education professionals anticipated they would no longer be working in education.

Impact on the sector

1. As a result of using Oak, most frequently survey respondents reported that they had swapped or added certain lessons based on Oak's curricula, followed by changing how they sequence their curriculum, as opposed to using Oak as their main curriculum sequence. Around half of users agreed that Oak's curriculum and resources have improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum.
2. Oak is used as a professional development tool especially to support subject knowledge, which is valuable in particular for teachers covering multiple subjects (e.g. in primary schools) and non-subject specialists, including those covering lessons.
3. In focus groups, participants felt that Oak was a good starting point for curriculum development but then adaptation was important; some participants were frustrated by gaps in Oak's curriculum offering which may be associated the temporary reduction in resources that will be addressed in the Autumn term.
4. Oak users and non-users were similarly likely to report an understanding of general knowledge about curriculum intent and sequencing, but Oak users reported more secure understanding than non-users.
5. Oak users rate the quality of Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure and teacher resources as above average but below 'high' quality. Those who use Oak more frequently have more positive perceptions of quality.
6. The most frequently stated reasons non-users provided for not using Oak resources were already having lots of resources and thinking that Oak resources are suitable for emergency use only.

Impact on pupils

1. Oak users reported that higher proportions of their pupils were exceeding expectations than non-users to a statistically significant degree, and lower proportions of their pupils were behind expectations than non-users (although this was not statistically significant).
2. Oak resources support pupils who are not able in lessons to still have access to relevant content, which is an asset with continuing challenges around pupil attendance and for pupils who are excluded or isolated.
3. Teachers who communicate with parents and carers about Oak believe this has a positive impact on parents and carers' ability to engage with and support their child's learning, which positively impacts on pupils learning and school engagement.

4 Pupils' willingness to engage with Oak's resources in some cases has decreased, potentially due to an association with school closures and online learning.

5 Teachers find Oak a particularly beneficial resource for pupils with Special Educational Needs (both within mainstream settings and special schools) as pupils respond well to the structure, can revisit content as often as they need to and work at their own pace, and resources can be printed in front of them.

1. Introduction and methodology

Oak National Academy was set up in April 2020 as an emergency response to school closures during the pandemic. During this time, 58% of all teachers used Oak's resources and on their peak week 2.5 million pupils accessed Oak lessons. Once schools reopened in March 2021, Oak saw a change in how teachers use their resources, with a shift from remote to in-class use, using Oak mostly for curriculum and lesson planning and delivery. Oak's 8,000 resources are available for free, across most subjects from EYFS to Year 11, with over 90% of lessons having downloadable quizzes, slides and worksheets. Teachers can access these downloadable resources via the Teacher Hub, while pupils can access lessons via the Classroom.

In September 2022, Oak became an Arm's Length Body, and while their core outcome areas have not changed, they shifted focus to providing free, adaptable and high-quality resources suitable for in-class use, beyond remote learning. At this point, with the end of licencing agreements with some partners, a number of lessons and resources were taken down from the platform. This reduction in resources is important to consider and makes direct comparisons with previous years challenging. Oak will start releasing new lesson resources starting in Autumn 2023 in six subjects to start with (English, maths, science, geography, history and music), these will be specifically designed to support in-class use.

In April 2023, ImpactEd were commissioned to conduct an end-to-end evaluation of Oak's impact in 2022/23 (the focus of this evaluation report) and 2023/24. This follows two previous annual evaluations conducted in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

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:
  - Teachers (workload and expertise)
  - The sector (curriculum quality and resilience)
  - 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.

Oak National Academy: Theory of Change

Oak National Academy

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

Problems	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
1. Many schools don't have the time or support to design and implement a rigorous, carefully-sequenced curriculum 2. Teachers' workload is demanding, they need support that reduces their workload and respects their autonomy 3. Pupils can't always access the lessons they need, particularly pupils who need to catch up or to be stretched further 4. Professional development providers lack access to high-quality, subject exemplification to make their programmes more subject specific	1. Independent arms length body and interdisciplinary team, running an agile delivery process supported by a clear strategy, effective governance and enabling culture 2. Deep knowledge of our users (pupils, teachers, schools, school trusts and professional development providers), education evidence based on extensive research, data and our team's and partners' expertise 3. Broad, inclusive sector relationships with teachers, schools, experts and organisations 4. Established quality standards across all activity strands to lead to high quality outputs	1. Develop a user-centered, robust and accessible digital education platform 2. Create and continuously improve, with external partners, full curriculum packages for KS1-KS4, across a wide range of subjects (and where appropriate approaches) including stretch beyond the National Curriculum across the UK and scaffolded support for SEND 3. Support users to understand and make best use of these education products 4. Signpost and showcase alternative high-quality offers, encouraging schools to make informed curriculum choices	1. High quality, free, optional, digital education products used extensively by pupils, parents, teachers, schools, school trusts and professional development providers 2. Published new data and insights that advance sector understanding, including curriculum best practice 3. Full remote education provision backstop maintained and ready to be deployed in the event of future national disruption	**Impact on the sector** Curriculum quality improves within a coherent system that respects teacher autonomy Increased system resilience **Impact on teachers** Teacher expertise in curriculum design increases Teacher workload decreases allowing them to focus on higher value activities **Impact on pupils** Pupils have equitable access to more great lessons, improving outcomes and minimising disruption

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

- **Pupils**: Pupils have equitable access to more great lessons, improving outcomes and minimising disruption
- **Teachers**: Teacher expertise in curriculum design increases, and teacher workload decreases allowing them to focus on higher value activities
- **The sector**: Curriculum quality improves within a coherent system

This evaluation took a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative survey findings with qualitative interviews and focus groups. Both surveys and qualitative research were undertaken in June and July 2023. This combination allowed for a relatively thorough approach to exploring the impact of Oak on the outcomes identified in its Theory of Change. 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 last ten months. SchoolDash contributed to the evaluation work by conducting data analysis.

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)[2] and the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)[3]. Both surveys have been run with nationally representative samples of teachers, meaning external benchmarks are available for both, which we have referenced in their relevant sections. While the Teacher Wellbeing Index that is referenced here is from 2022, the latest benchmark for the Teacher Workload Survey is from 2019. As this benchmark is from before the pandemic and therefore before the period when plenty of schools, teachers and pupils have struggled due to the exceptional circumstances, comparability of this benchmark should be treated with caution. Additionally, national benchmarks have been taken from the Department for Education's 2023 report, 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'[4], National Education Union's 2023 retention survey[5] and a 2022 Teacher Tapp survey on curriculum understanding[6].

The survey was opened at the start of June 2023 and closed mid-July 2023, meaning the survey was open for seven weeks. In order to reach both Oak users and non-Oak users, the survey was distributed in a variety of ways, including Oak's and ImpactEd's social media

[2] Department for Education, October 2019. 'Teacher Workload Survey 2019'

[3] Education Support, 2022. 'Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022'

[4] Department for Education, April 2023. 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'

[5] National Education Union, April 2023. 'State of Education: recruitment and retention'

[6] Teacher Tapp, January 2022. 'Did teachers get yelled at by parents more often during the pandemic? (This week's findings...)'

accounts and networks, through paid social media advertisements, and through a targeted survey provider[7].

There was a total of 1,302 participants to the survey. 65% of respondents were current users of Oak while 35% were not. Most user and non-user participants were teachers (69% of users and 64% of non-users), next most frequently respondents were middle leaders (22% of users and 25% of non-users), as opposed to senior leaders (9% of users and 10% of non-users).

Most respondents worked in primary state schools (48% of users and 61% of non-users), followed by secondary state schools (38% of users and 26% of non-users). A notably higher proportion of users who responded to the survey worked in independent schools (15%) compared to non-user survey respondents (5%). Small proportions of respondents worked in specialist schools, nurseries, all-through schools and alternative provision.

We also asked survey respondents about the governance model of their school. The majority of users worked in schools that are part of a Multi-Academy Trust (41%) followed by Local Authority maintained schools (35%), a trend reversed in non-users (45% Local Authority maintained and 39% Multi-Academy Trust). However, this trend may be explained by the larger proportion of non-users working in primary state schools, which are more likely to be local authority managed than secondary schools. Around 20% of users work in stand-alone academies as opposed to 13% of non-users; small proportions of respondents worked in schools with other governance models.

English, Maths, Science and History were used most within this sample, which broadly aligns with the most frequently used subjects based on platform analytics data (with English and Maths also the most frequently used subjects).

As this was not a randomised experiment and Oak and non-Oak users were not randomly assigned to their groups, we had to make sure both groups were properly matched and weighted within our sample to minimise any bias in the 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 then helps to reduce the potential bias of confounding variables mimicking randomisation and reducing treatment assignment bias. As teachers' responses to questions on workload and wellbeing are often influenced by the role and school type of the respondent, a matching approach was vital. Using a PSM approach allowed us to make our groups more comparable and reduce the opportunity for bias in the results.

As the Oak user sample (849) was larger than the non-Oak user sample (453), this meant the Oak user sample had to be reduced in order to match the two groups like-for-like. Matching was based on the following two variables: type of school and school role. This resulted in a matched group of 429 pairs of respondents.

[7] The provider was SmartSurvey: https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/

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 helps us 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 between sub-groups of note.

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 very unlikely to have occurred given the null hypothesis. In other words, if a result is statistically significant, it is unlikely to have occurred due purely to chance. When reporting on statistical significance, we use the standard social science convention of a 'significant' p-value being 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.

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 2023. Participants were recruited through the survey, as well as individuals who have 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.

A total of 6 focus groups and 6 interviews were held with a total of 28 participants. While the aim of qualitative research is never to be fully representative of a wider sample, it is generally helpful to understand the breakdown of the sample compared to the overall user group. 14 of the individuals used Oak with secondary school pupils, 11 with primary school pupils, and 3 worked in specialist schools. In terms of subjects that participants used Oak with:

- Of the secondary school users, 6 used Oak for Science, 2 for Maths, 2 for languages (across French, Spanish and Latin), 2 for PSHE, 1 for English, and 1 for History (some individuals used across multiple subjects)
- Of the primary school users, 5 used Oak across subjects, five for English / Literacy, 1 for History and Geography and 1 for French
- Of the specialist school users, 1 used Oak across subjects, 1 for Science and 1 for English.

Half of our interviewees (14) were middle leaders and a further 2 were senior leaders. Eight are classroom teachers (with one of these an Early Career Teacher) and one a Higher Level Teaching Assistant. The job roles of three participants were not specified.

The qualitative data was analysed using a deductive thematic approach, meaning that we systematically 'code' 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 as well.

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 2022/23 academic year
- Triangulating either survey or qualitative findings with usage analytics.

Analytics data reflects the period between 1st September 2022 and 16th July 2023 for this academic year. ImpactEd 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 helpful 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 do not match perfectly with Oak's wider user base. While we do not expect this to significantly affect the findings, it is possible that this may bias results.
- While the sample overall is sufficiently large to allow for meaningful statistical analysis, sub-group breakdowns for some particular user groups within the sample are smaller, making the variability in the data higher and reliability of findings for specific sub-groups lower.
- All data on teacher outcomes is 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 does 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. This will be addressed through the addition of qualitative research with pupils in next year's annual evaluation.

2. Implementation and usage

Key findings:

1. In the 2022/23 academic year, teachers downloaded a total of 1.13m resources and 9.6m lessons were taken by pupils through Oak National Academy, with an average of 102k pupils and 30k teachers using the site each week (excluding school holidays). Direct comparisons with previous years is challenging, as Oak had fewer subjects and lessons, following the end of licensing agreements with some partners.
2. 93% of teachers are aware of Oak and 25% of teachers used Oak this year based on a Teacher Tapp survey. Outside of a weekly cycle of Oak use, there were large spikes in Oak usage coinciding with teacher strikes this academic year.
3. Oak is used across all school types in England, but is more heavily used in secondary schools than primary schools (61.4% of secondary schools compared to 30.3% of primary) and state schools (37%) than independent schools (31.2%). Oak continues to be more frequently used in more disadvantaged areas, and Maths and English are the most used subjects. Three quarters of survey respondents reported that Oak is used across one or multiple departments or phases in their school, while a fifth reported said that as far as they were aware, only they used it – Oak was reported to be used across the whole school by only a small minority (6%) of respondents.
4. 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 in alignment with Oak's intention as a provision backstop to minimise disruption. Use of Oak as a professional development tool to support and develop knowledge of subject content was also discussed in qualitative focus groups.

Oak National Academy conducted analyses of usage data based on activity between 1st September 2022 and 16th July 2023. In this school year, **teachers downloaded a total of 1.13m resources** (slides, quizzes, worksheets and curriculum maps) and **9.6m lessons were taken by pupils**. During this period, an average of **102k pupils and 30k teachers used the site each week** (excluding school holidays). Direct comparisons with previous years is challenging, as Oak had fewer subjects and lessons, following the end of licensing agreements with some partners.

93% of teachers are aware of Oak in June 2023 (stable with previous year's awareness of 94%), and 25% of teachers used Oak (down from 39% previously, which we assume is linked to the reduced resource availability) based on a survey conducted through Teacher Tapp. From the same survey, 72% of users said they would recommend Oak, which had decreased from 77%.

When was Oak used?

Pupil activity continued to show a clear weekly cycle, (typically around 50,000 lessons taken a day). Nevertheless, there were some **very large spikes, mostly coinciding with teacher strikes** on 1st February, 1st March, 15th March, 27th April, 2nd May and 5th July.

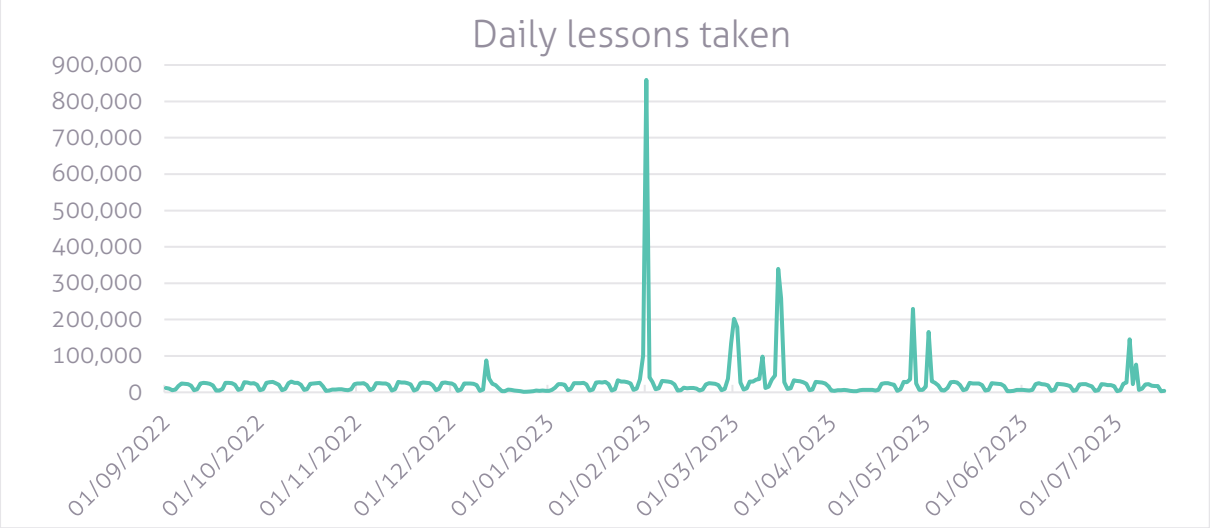


Figure 1: Number of daily lessons taken, based on Oak analytics data

This was supported in qualitative research, with three teachers discussing using Oak resources to provide cover during teacher strike days.

Who used Oak's resources?

During September 2022 to July 2023, Oak remained widely used across all types of school in England. Based on Oak's analytics data, it continued to be **more heavily used by teachers in secondary schools than those in primary schools**, with 61.4% of secondary schools reached compared to 30.3% of primary schools (36.5% of all schools). It was **more heavily used by teachers in state schools** (37% of state schools reached) **than those in independent schools** (31.2%).

In line with this trend, the majority of lessons taken were for Key Stage 3 (KS, 55.4%), followed by KS2 (25.1%), KS4 (9.6%) and smaller proportions of lessons taken for Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1.

Maths and English were the most popular subjects based on Oak analytics data (22% each), followed by Computing, Science and History (between 7 to 9% of use). Subject popularity was largely influenced this year by the unavailability of some of Oak's content (KS3 and KS4 Science, Geography and Art, KS4 History and English).

Oak is more frequently used in more disadvantaged areas, based on the number of lesson starts by IDACI quintile (income deprivation affecting children index).

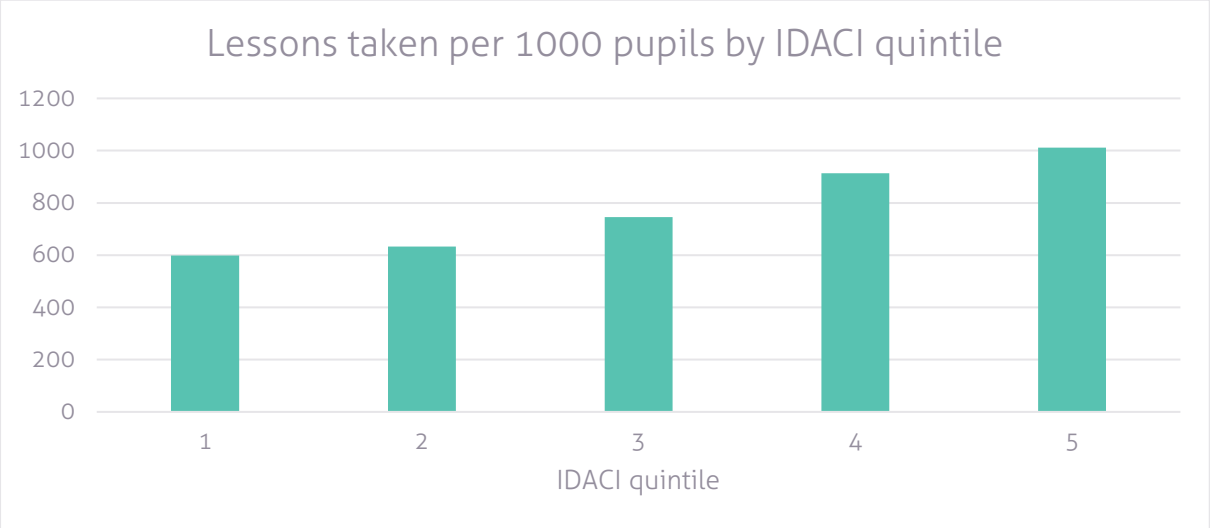


Figure 2: Number of lessons taken per 1000 pupils by IDACI quintile, based on Oak analytics data

Oak users were asked in the survey about how many teaching staff they think are consistently using Oak resources in their school. **40% of respondents reported that their department or phase uses it, a further 32% reported that it is used across multiple departments or phases,** and 6% reported that it is used by the whole school. Around a fifth (22%) 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 (47% of secondary users compared to 29% of primary users; primary school users were more likely to report Oak being used across the whole school or that they were the only user they were aware of than secondary users.

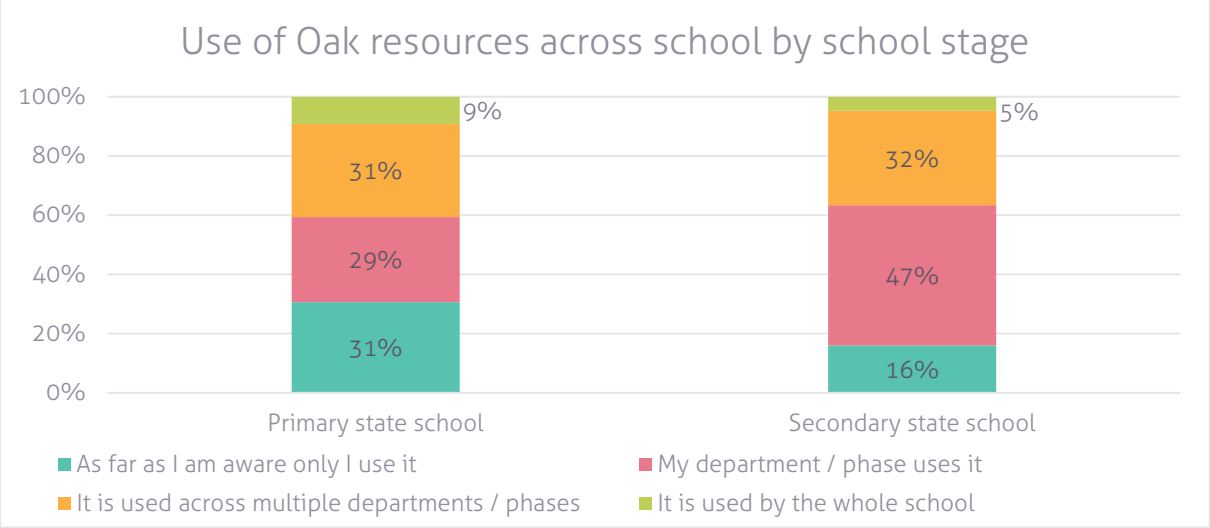


Figure 3: How users reported that Oak is used across their school, comparing responses of primary state school users (n=327) to secondary state school users (n=319)

How were Oak's resources used?

Of those who are currently using Oak, **half of survey respondents said that they started using Oak before the last school year** (March 2020 to August 2021) **and a further 39% started using Oak last school year** (September 2021 to August 2022). Only 11% of users started using Oak this school year (September 2022 to present) – a pattern that aligns with trends from previous years' evaluation reports. From the qualitative research, all but one participants began using Oak during the Covid-19 pandemic-related school closures, with most teachers starting to use it at the start of the pandemic to provide online learning lessons and resources to support the adaptation which was taking place at the time.

In the survey, users were asked what the main ways they used Oak's resources were (and able to select multiple options). The **most frequently selected use case was lesson planning,** with 37% of the 849 Oak users selecting this, followed by **lesson delivery in the classroom** (31%) and **curriculum planning** (27%). In alignment with Oak's intention as a provision backstop to minimise disruption, 27% of respondents said that they use Oak for setting cover lessons and work for absent pupils. Around a fifth of respondents also said that they use Oak for setting homework and professional development.

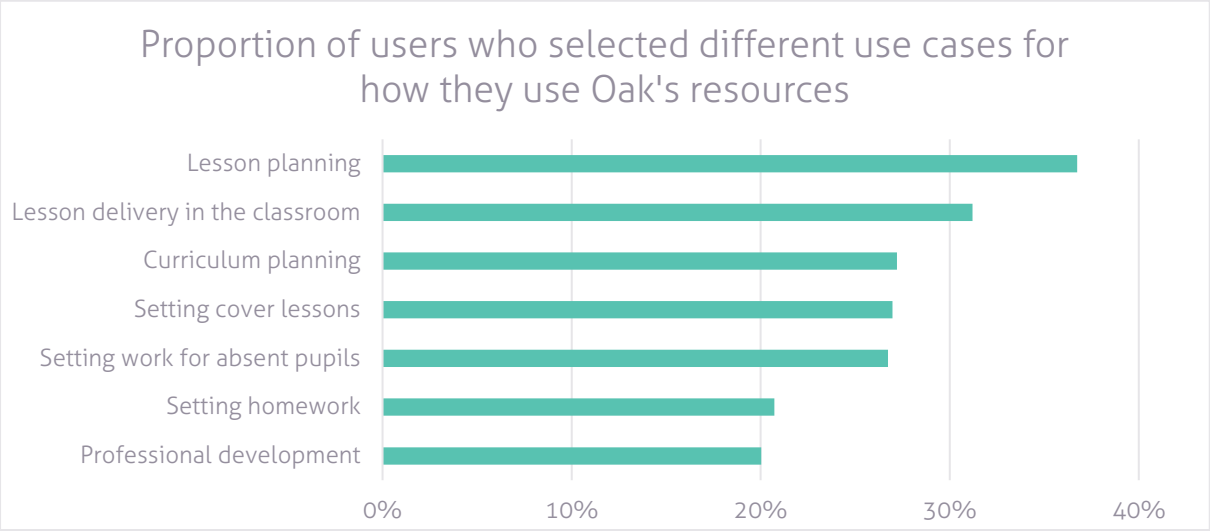


Figure 4: Proportion of users who selected use cases as the main ways they use Oak's resources (n=849)

In qualitative research, participants talked about their use of Oak in the context of "the return to normal" within schools following the Covid-19 pandemic response. Now, all participants are using Oak resources to **supplement their current curriculum**, although frequency of use varied across the sample. No participants had completely redesigned their curriculums using Oak resources, but instead have used the Powerpoints, sheets and quizzes to supplement the curriculum they have in place. Teachers spoke about Oak as a useful starting point to get ideas from when lesson planning, while retaining ownership over their planning and resources in line with their knowledge of their pupils.

In all focus groups, teachers explored how the Oak resources have been used by themselves or colleagues as a **professional development tool to develop subject**

knowledge. Senior leaders discussed directing Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to the resources to support their understanding of subject content as well as demonstrating different methods and strategies which can be used to engage pupils, and teachers who were relatively new to the profession or to a subject leadership role saw Oak as a valuable resource. Similarly, focus group participants discussed the value of Oak where non-subject specialists are delivering lessons to support their preparation and delivery.

Focus group participants also discussed the continued use of Oak resources for **setting and delivering cover lessons**. Some teachers set Oak lessons for cover as they believe where non subject specialists are covering this limits misconceptions and ensures that pupils do not miss lessons. Where **pupil absence** continues to be a challenge in schools, the majority of teachers feel that they are able to find resources which are closely aligned with their lesson objectives and set this to make sure that the pupil does not fall behind. When pupils are excluded or in isolation, teachers trust that they will be able to use a resource from Oak to make sure they are still getting access to the lesson objectives and high-quality resources.

Of those that did not use Oak (n=453), 51% of them said they had never used Oak before, of whom about a third had not heard of Oak and two thirds had heard of Oak before. 43% of non-users had used Oak occasionally in previous years, and a small proportion had used Oak consistently and then stopped using them (6%).

In qualitative research, some teachers talked about how there is a slight shift in the perception of Oak amongst schools now, where many teachers were directed to it beforehand to support planning and resources; some now feel this is actively discouraged. Two teachers stated that they are now told not to use Oak resources either for lesson planning or cover. They stated "it is heavily frowned upon in my school, it is seen as lazy and should only be used in an emergency." Another teacher said "the message hasn't been given to us directly about not using Oak but we have been told not to use White Rose Maths for these reasons so I think it will be the same with Oak."

3. Impact on teachers

Key findings:

1. Oak users reported working a mean of 31.5 hours compared to 42 hours a week for non-users – a difference that was statistically significant. (It is not possible to compare this data to national benchmarks due to differences in the methodology related to full/part time working.) The benefits were most notable for those who use Oak a few times a month or more and for senior leaders.

2. Oak users were less likely to consider teacher workload a serious problem in their school than non-users to a statistically significant degree; primary school Oak users consider teacher workload to be a more serious problem than secondary school users. 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 than non-users to a statistically significant degree.

3. 40% of Oak users said that using Oak had decreased their workload with an average time saved of 4 hours per week, 54% said that using Oak had not impacted their workload and the remaining 6% said using Oak had increased their workload (with an average of 7 hours per week added). In qualitative research, participants reported using time saved through using Oak on feedback, assessment and supporting pupils directly instead.

4. Wellbeing scores for Oak users were higher (meaning better wellbeing) than non-users (43.76 compared to 40.65), a difference which was statistically significant. However, both users and non-users' scores were lower (poorer wellbeing) in Summer 2023 than the overall education workforce average from 2022 (44.01).

5. The proportion of Oak users who anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time was notably lower than non-users – 9% compared to 29% - and also compared favourably to a national benchmark where 16% of education professionals anticipated they would no longer be working in education.

Impact on teacher workload

Key finding: Oak users reported working a mean of 31.5 hours compared to 42 hours a week for non-users – a difference that was statistically significant. The benefits were most notable for those who use Oak a few times a month or more and for senior leaders.

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 have been compared (using matched groups) to identify any differences in perceptions of workload that can be

associated with using Oak. Where possible, we have compared with responses from national surveys of teachers throughout this section.

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?" After removing responses deemed to be invalid (those who gave responses over 110 hours a week), users worked a mean of 31.5 hours compared to 42 hours a week of work for non-users – a difference that was statistically significant. We **did not distinguish between full and part time workers** in the survey, meaning it is not possible to compare these results to national benchmarks that use a different methodology.

The amount of time reported to be spent on activities related to respondents' jobs decreased notably in line with frequency of Oak usage, as depicted in the chart below – suggesting that **those who use Oak a few times a month or more benefit most from workload savings compared to non-users (a statistically significant difference)**. Although the difference between those who use Oak once a month or less often and not at all was not significant, the difference between non-users and more regular users (at least a few times a month) was statistically significant.

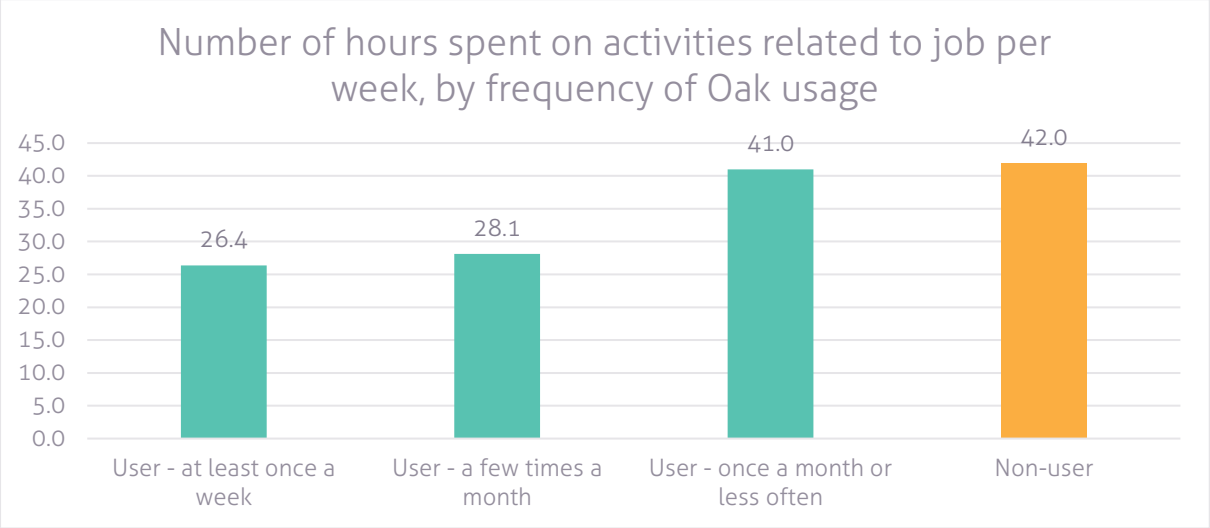


Figure 5: Number of hours reported to be spent on activities related to job in most recent full working week, by frequency of Oak usage

When looking at respondent's job role, **senior leaders who used Oak spent 15.1 hours less time on average on activities related to their job than senior leaders who didn't use Oak, a difference that was statistically significant** and also reported having the largest average workload – see below. Users who were in a teaching role reported working 10.5 hours less than non-users on average, and for middle leaders the difference was 8.2 hours – also for these two subgroups the differences between users and non-users were not statistically significant.

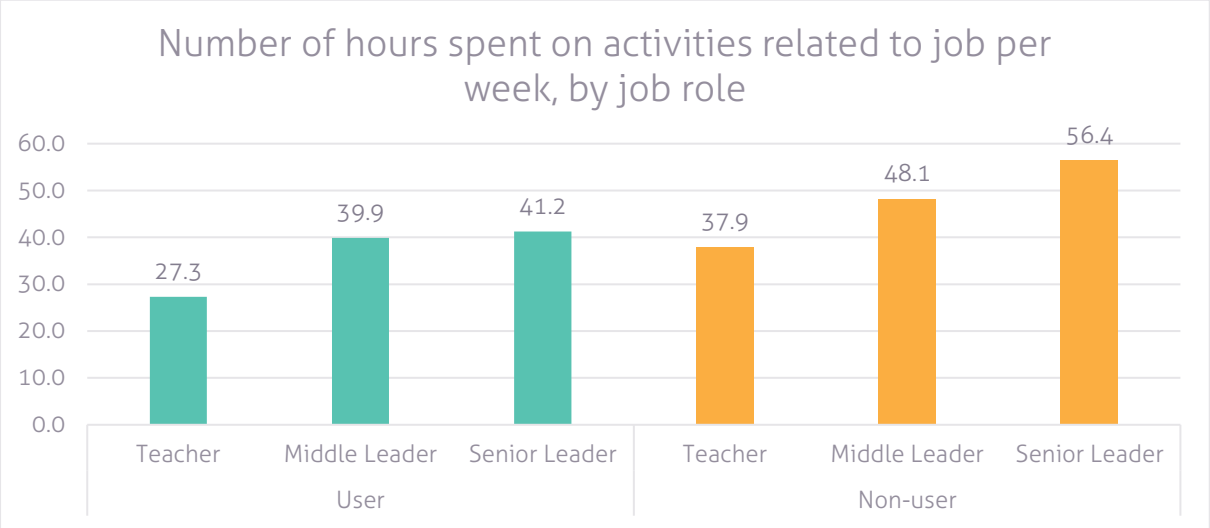


Figure 6: Number of hours reported to be spent on activities related to job in most recent full working week, by job role

Key finding: Oak users reported spending more time than non-users on lesson planning and preparation, an average of 10.7 compared to 8.8 hours, although this was not a statistically significant difference.

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, as activities that it is expected use of Oak resources would have the most time saving benefit for. In fact, **Oak users reported spending more time than non-users on lesson planning and preparation**, an average of 10.7 compared to 8.8 hours, although this difference was not statistically significant. Again we removed responses deemed to be invalid (those who gave responses over 60 hours a week) prior to conducting this analysis. Although the largest difference across Oak users and non-users in hours spent on this activity was for senior leaders when breaking down by job roles, this trend holds true across all levels of seniority.

While this finding is interesting as an apparent contradiction (with Oak users spending more time on lesson planning and preparation despite spending less time working as a whole), more research is needed in order to understand the reasons for this – for instance, whether Oak users are more likely to work part time and non-users full time, or whether the length of time individuals have used Oak affects this outcome.

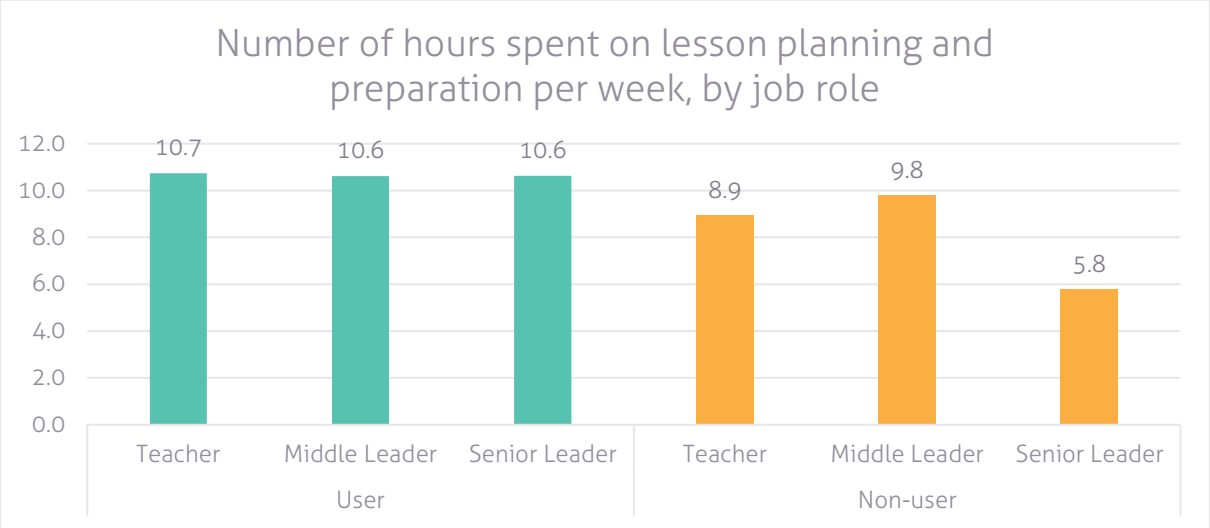


Figure 7: Number of hours reported to be spent on lesson planning and preparation in most recent full working week, by job role

Key finding: Oak users were less likely to consider teacher workload a serious problem in their school than non-users to a statistically significant degree; primary school Oak users consider teacher workload to be a more serious problem than secondary school users.

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)

Oak users were less likely to consider teacher workload a serious problem in their school than non-users, with 64% of users considering teacher workload a fairly to very serious problem (scores of 3, 4 or 5 out of 5) compared to 79% of non-users, a difference that was statistically significant.

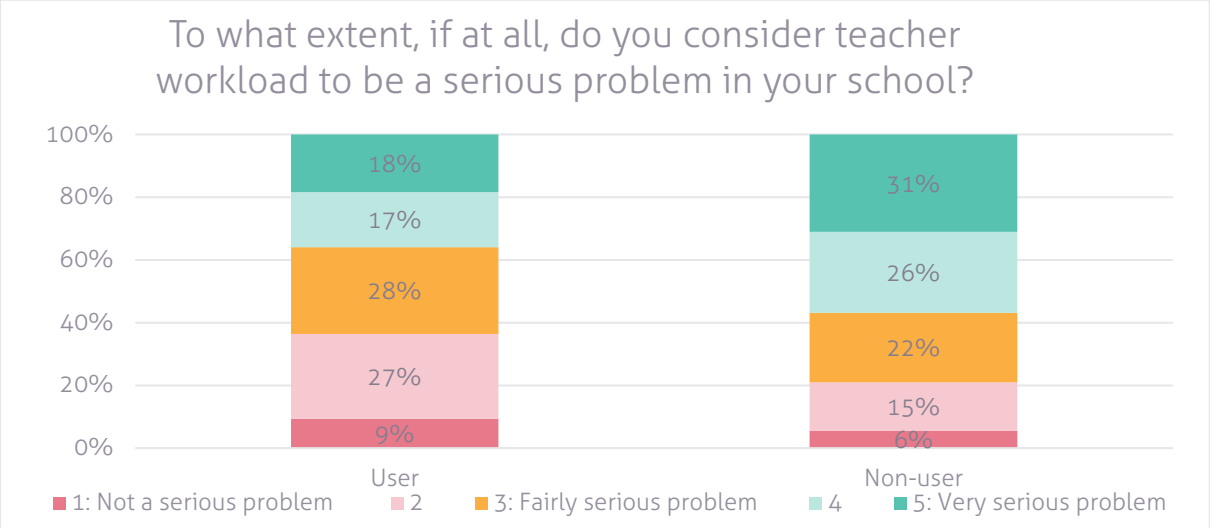


Figure 8: Responses to the question ' To what extent, if at all, do you consider teacher workload to be a serious problem in your school?', response options from1: Not a serious problem to 5: Very serious problem, comparing Oak users to non-users

For non-users, the mean score for this question was similar across respondents who worked in primary and secondary state schools (3.68 to 3.69 respectively), but mean scores were higher for primary (3.15) than secondary (2.93) school users - so **primary school Oak users consider teacher workload to be a more serious problem than secondary school users** (although it should be noted that this difference was not statistically significant). The Teacher Workload Survey also asked teachers nationally this question – although it should be noted that the latest published findings are from 2019 – and also found that primary school staff were more likely than secondary school staff to report that teacher workload was problematic.[8]

Key finding: 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 than non-users to a statistically significant degree.

Oak users were more likely to report being able to complete their assigned workload during contracted working hours than non-users, with 29% of users agreeing with this statement (scores of 4 or 5 out of 5) compared to 15% of non-users. This was a statistically significant difference.

[8] Department for Education, October 2019. 'Teacher Workload Survey 2019'

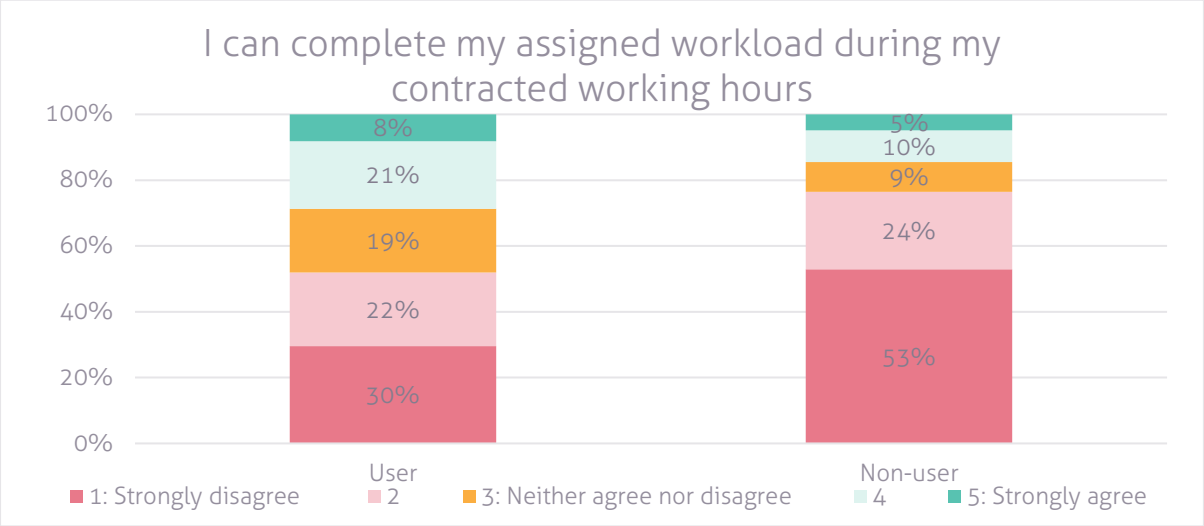


Figure 9: Responses to the statement 'I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours', response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users

Across both users and non-users for this statement, mean scores were slightly lower for primary school staff than secondary school staff as demonstrated in the graph below. The differences between primary users and non-users and secondary users and non-users were both statistically significant; the difference between primary and secondary users was significant whereas the difference between primary and secondary non-users was not.

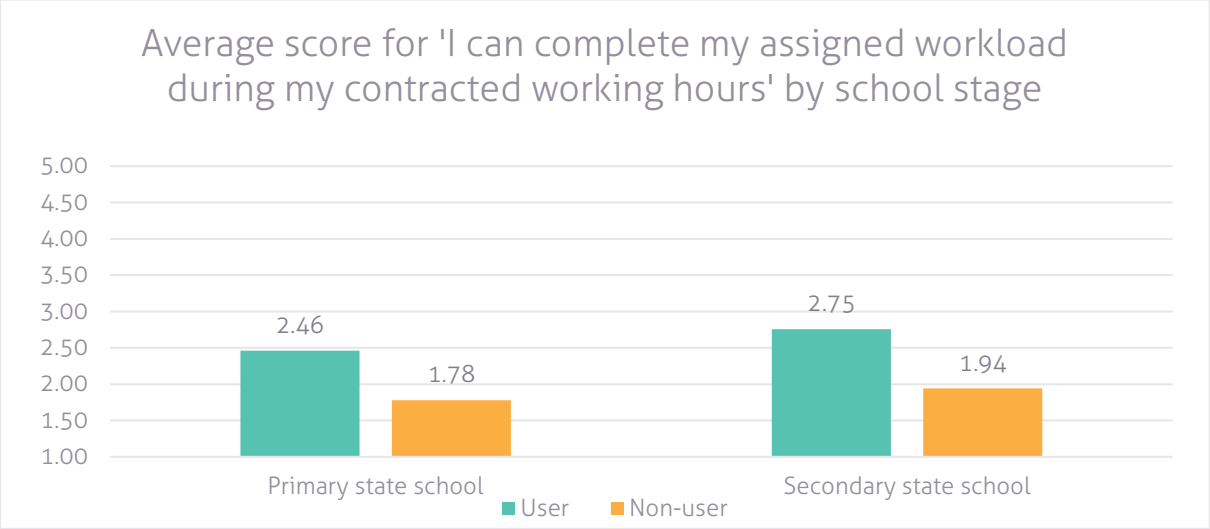


Figure 10: Mean responses to the statement 'I can complete my assigned workload during my contracted working hours', response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users by school stage

Oak users were also more likely to report that they had an acceptable workload than non-users, with 28% of users agreeing with this statement (scores of 4 or 5 out of 5) compared to 17% of non-users – a statistically significant difference.

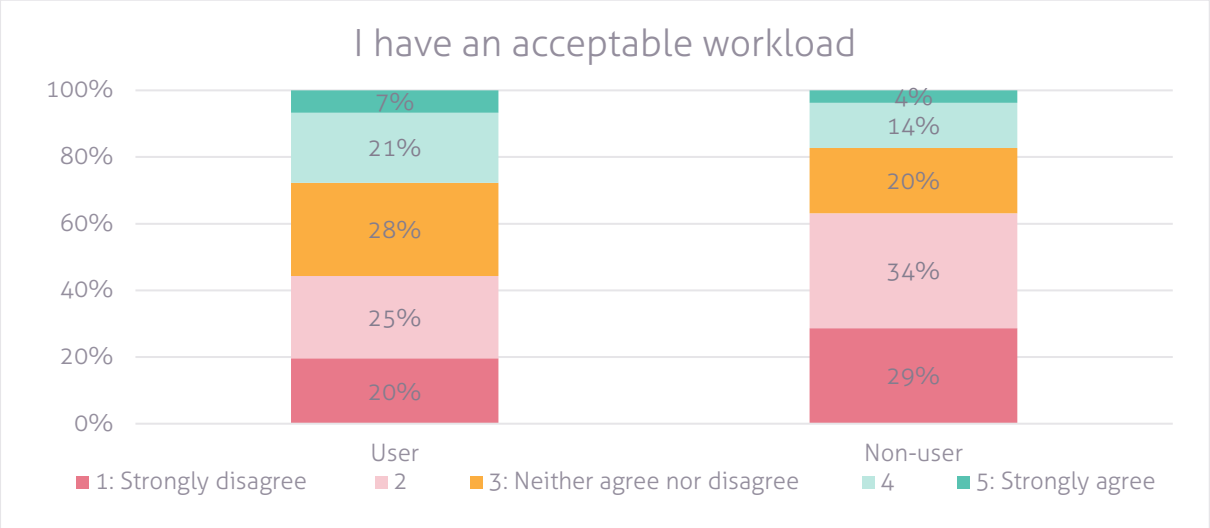


Figure 11: Responses to the statement 'I have an acceptable workload, response options from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, comparing Oak users to non-users

Non-user responses align with those from national research reported in the Department for Education research 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'[9] report where only 17% agreed that their workload was acceptable, increasing the validity of these survey findings – however, it should be noted that the national research did not distinguish between Oak users and non-users so Oak users may have been included in this sample.

Frequency of use of Oak appears to be associated with more positive perceptions of workload, with those using Oak at least once a week having the most positive scores across the three statements, positivity decreasing as frequency of use decreases, and those who do not use Oak having the least positive perceptions of workload – as depicted in the graph below.

[9] Department for Education, April 2023. 'Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1'

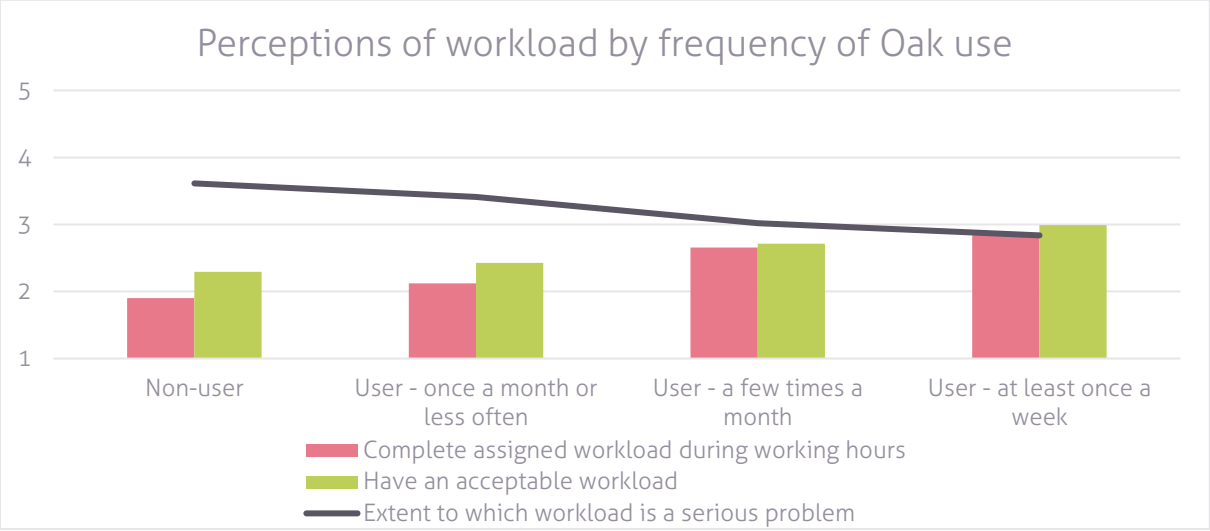


Figure 12: Responses to the three statements related to perceptions of workload comparing Oak users to non-users; higher scores for being able to complete assigned workload during working hours and having an acceptable workload are more positive, while a lower score for extent to which workload is a serious problem is more positive

Key finding: 40% of Oak users said that using Oak had decreased their workload with an average time saved of 4 hours per week, 54% said that using Oak had not impacted their workload and the remaining 6% said using Oak had increased their workload (with an average of 7 hours per week added).

Oak users were specifically asked about how using Oak affected their workload this school year (2022/2023). **40% of Oak users said that using Oak had decreased their workload** (n=338), 54% said that using Oak had not impacted their workload (n=456) and the remaining 6% said using Oak had increased their workload (n=55).

For those who said using Oak had decreased their workload, the **average time saving per week was 4 hours**, with highest time savings for teachers (4 hours) compared to middle and senior leaders (2 hours). Here we use the median to avoid outliers.

Primary school users were more likely to say Oak had decreased their workload than secondary school users (46% of primary school users compared to 36% of secondary school users), although this was not statistically significant. However, secondary school users who said that Oak had decreased their workload reported larger average time savings compared to primary school users (5 hours to 2 each week).

For those who said using Oak had increased their workload, **the average time reported to be added per week was 7 hours**. Because the number of respondents who said that using Oak had increased their workload was relatively small (55), it was not possible to draw any conclusions from more detailed subgroup analysis here. Again, the median is presented here.

Key finding: In qualitative research, participants reported using time saved through using Oak on feedback, assessment and supporting pupils directly instead.

In qualitative research, participants talked about how Oak resources play a role in reducing workload. Where teachers can save time by using Oak's resources, they are able to **direct this time into feedback, assessment and supporting pupils** in a post Covid-19 pandemic context where pupils' wellbeing and mental health are a priority for schools. Saving time on lesson planning was seen as highly valuable as this is a particularly time-consuming activity for some staff members. Teachers recognised that the ability to adapt, personalise and differentiate Oak resources has significantly reduced their workload (compared to having less adaptable resources), and also the use of Oak as inspiration for lesson planning led to time saving benefits.

However, it was felt by participants that the amount of time saved as a result of using Oak had decreased over time, particularly when comparing time savings now to time savings during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. They associated this with less acceptance of using Oak resources without any adaptation and greater expectations from schools of adapting planning and resources specifically. One teacher felt that at times having to adapt and edit the resources was almost as time consuming as creating them from scratch and therefore did not reduce workload.

Impact on teacher wellbeing

Key finding: Wellbeing scores for Oak users were higher (meaning better wellbeing) than non-users (43.76 compared to 40.65), a difference which was statistically significant. Both users and non-users' scores were lower (poorer wellbeing) in Summer 2023 than the overall education workforce average from 2022 (44.01).

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 43.76 compared to non-users' score of 40.65, suggesting that the mental wellbeing of Oak users was more positive than non-users**, a statistically significant difference. Differences between users and non-users were consistent across primary state school staff and secondary state school staff, but more distinct for senior leaders (14.5% difference) and teachers (7.53% difference) as opposed to middle leaders, where the difference was more minimal (2.38%). **Differences between users and non-users for all three types of job role were statistically significant.**

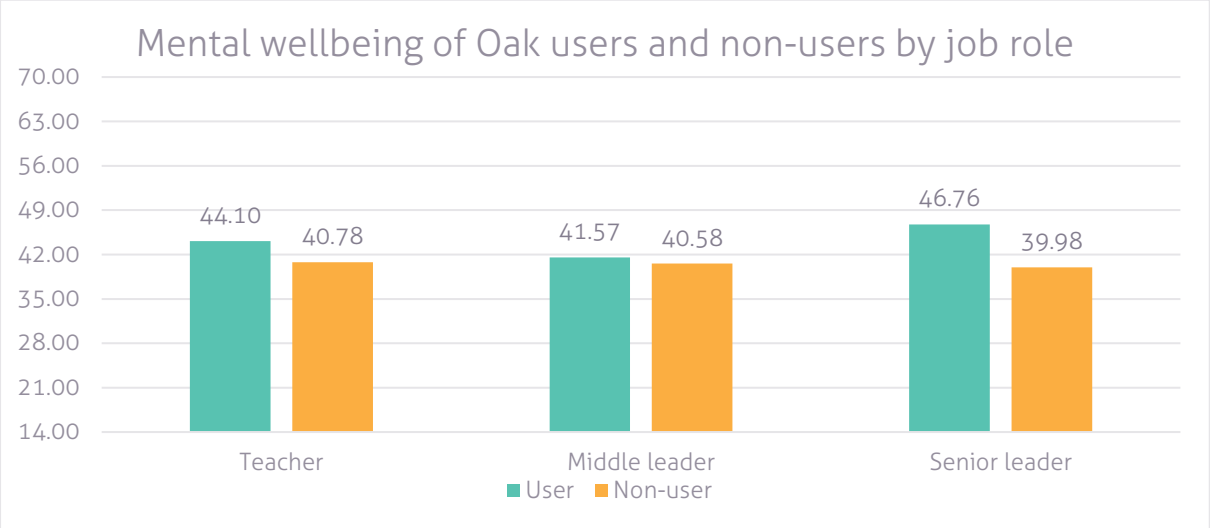


Figure 13: Mental wellbeing scores, using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, of Oak users and non-users, by job role

National benchmarks for teacher wellbeing using the WEMWBS are available through the Teacher Wellbeing Index[10], with the latest score calculated from a survey of education staff conducted in June and July 2022. **Both users and non-users' scores were lower than the overall wellbeing score of the education workforce of 44.01**, although this research was conducted a year earlier.

Key finding: The proportion of Oak users who anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time was notably lower than non-users – 9% compared to 29% - and also compared favourably to a national benchmark where 16% of education professionals anticipated they would no longer be working in education.

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 (26% and 27% 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 – 9% compared to 29%.** Instead, more Oak users anticipated they would be looking for promotion or changing role or setting but remaining in education. The differences between users and non-users in relation to future expectations were statistically significant. The responses from Oak users also compare favourably to the National Education Union's (NEU) survey of members, conducted in February 2023, where a higher proportion of respondents anticipated working in the same role (40%) and a higher proportion anticipated no longer working in education (16%). The differences in the survey

[10] Education Support, 2022. 'Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022'

sample should be noted (with the NEU survey including teachers, leaders and support staff in schools in England and Wales), but these results are still positive.

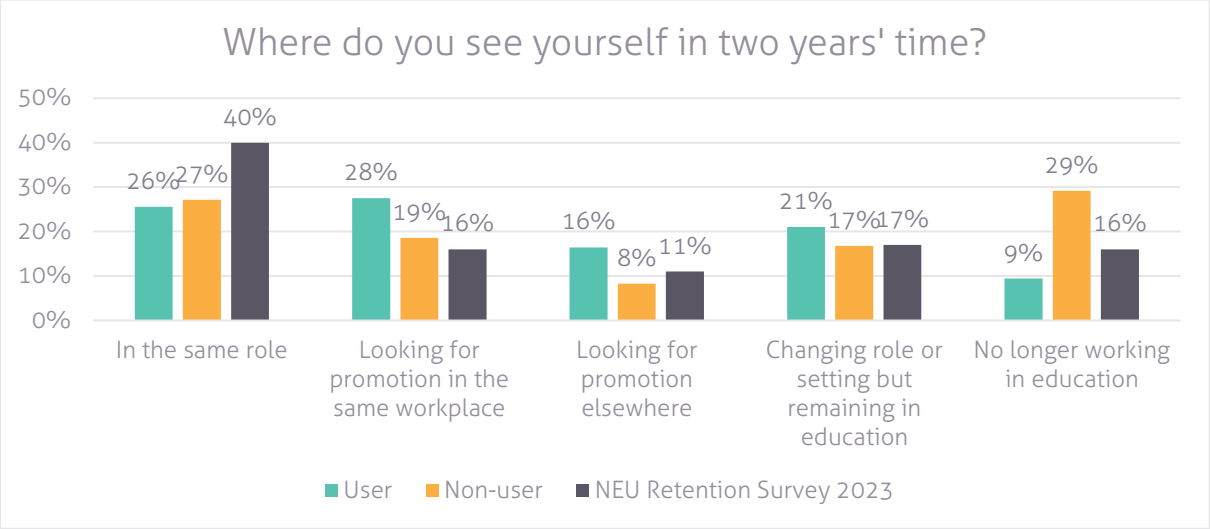


Figure 14: Responses to the question 'Where do you see yourself in two years' time?', with respondents able to select one of six options and 'don't know' responses excluded from the analysis, comparing Oak users (n=414) to non-users (n=387) and to the National Education Union (NEU) State of Education survey[11], conducted February 2023 with 18,000 NEU members who are teachers, leaders and support staff in schools in England and Wales

[11] National Education Union, April 2023. 'State of Education: recruitment and retention'

4. Impact on the sector

Key findings:

1. As a result of using Oak, most frequently survey respondents reported that they had swapped or added certain lessons based on Oak's curricula, followed by changing how they sequence their curriculum, as opposed to using Oak as their main curriculum sequence.
2. Around half of users agreed that Oak's curriculum and resources have improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum.
3. Oak is used as a professional development tool especially to support subject knowledge, which is valuable in particular for teachers covering multiple subjects (e.g. in primary schools) and non-subject specialists, including those covering lessons.
4. In focus groups, participants felt that Oak was a good starting point for curriculum development but then adaptation was important; some participants were frustrated by gaps in Oak's curriculum offering.
5. Oak users and non-users were similarly likely to report an understanding of general knowledge about curriculum intent and sequencing, but Oak users reported more secure understanding than non-users.
6. Oak users rate the quality of Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure and teacher resources as above average but below 'high' quality. Those who use Oak more frequently have more positive perceptions of quality.
7. From qualitative research, Oak is seen as user-friendly and providing useful resources which can inspire teachers to create their own lessons or be easily adapted – and that this is available to teachers at no cost is valuable. Areas of improvement for Oak included improving the quality of resources, having a wider variety of resources available, making resources more adaptable, and improving schools' awareness of resources available.
8. The most frequently stated reasons non-users provided for not using Oak resources were already having lots of resources and thinking that Oak resources are suitable for emergency use only.

Impact on curriculum, lesson design and teaching practice

Key finding: As a result of using Oak, most frequently survey respondents reported that they had swapped or added certain lessons based on Oak's curricula, followed by changing how they sequence their curriculum, as opposed to using Oak as their main curriculum sequence.

Oak users were asked about the most typical way that Oak's resources have impacted on their school's curriculum, focusing on the curricula they have been involved in making decisions about. Excluding those who weren't sure, **most frequently respondents reported that they had swapped or added certain lessons based on Oak's curricula (43%), followed by changing how they sequence their curriculum based on Oak's curricula (29%).** Around a fifth of user respondents reported that Oak's resources have not impacted on their curriculum at all. Only a small minority (6%) said that Oak's curriculum had become their main curriculum sequence.

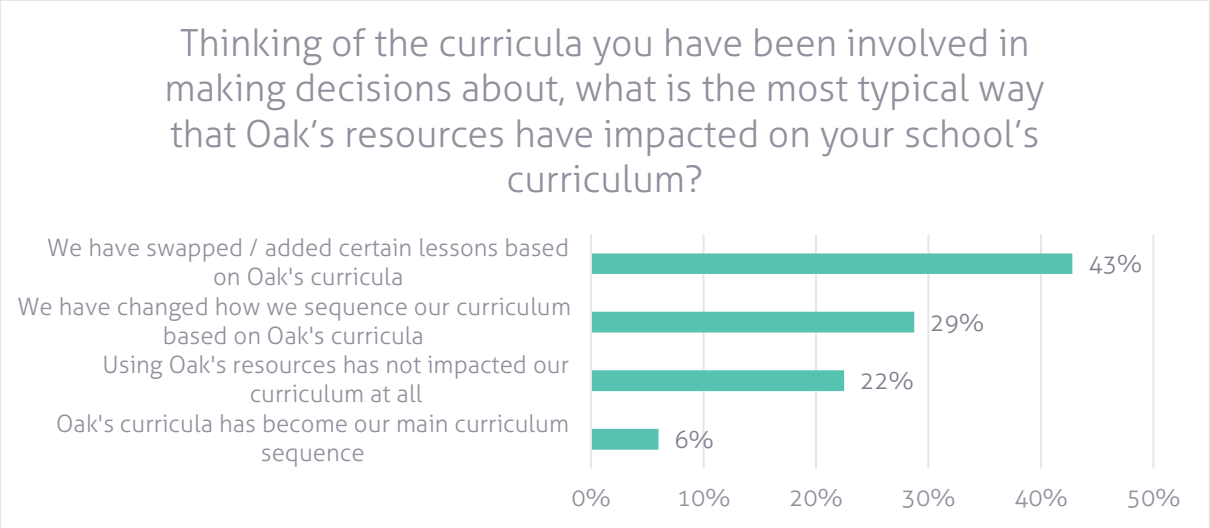


Figure 15: Responses to the question 'Thinking of the curricula you have been involved in making decisions about, what is the most typical way that Oak's resources have impacted on your school's curriculum?', with respondents able to select one of five options and 'don't know' responses excluded from the analysis (n=769)

Key finding: Around half of users agreed that Oak's curriculum and resources have 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 respondents agreeing that Oak's curriculum and resources have 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 respondents reporting**

that Oak's curriculum and resources have improved their school's overall curriculum. It should be noted that around a third of respondents gave neutral responses across the three statements.

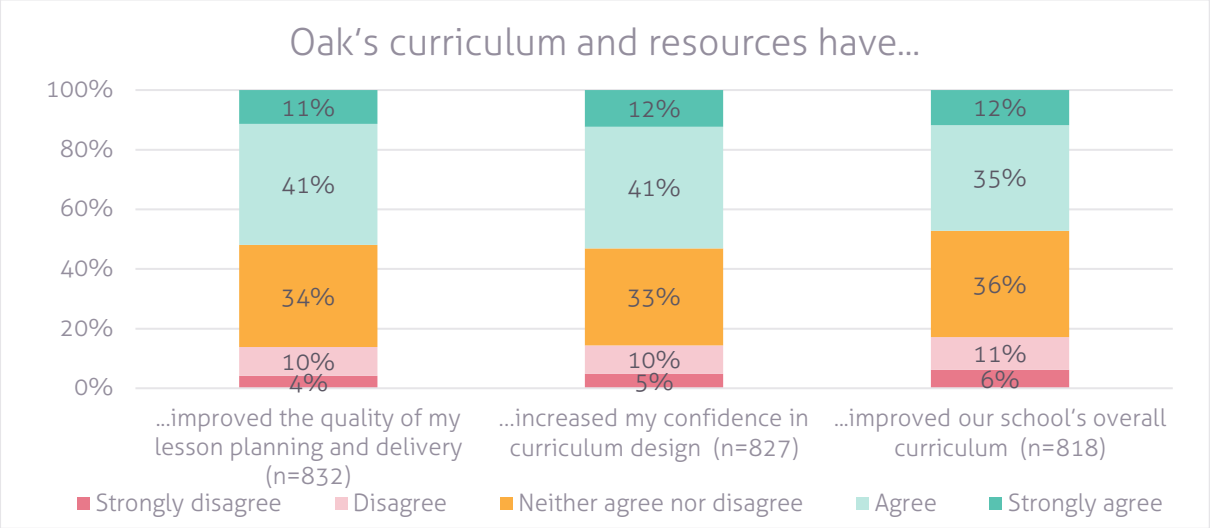


Figure 16: Oak users' responses to three statements about the impact of Oak's curriculum and resources on a scale from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, sample sizes for each statement as indicated

Across all three statements, frequency of Oak use is associated with higher mean scores, as depicted in the graph below. This was more notable in particular in the first two statements, which are associated with the impact on individuals, as opposed to the third statement which is associated with the impact on a school's curriculum, although the trend is still consistent.

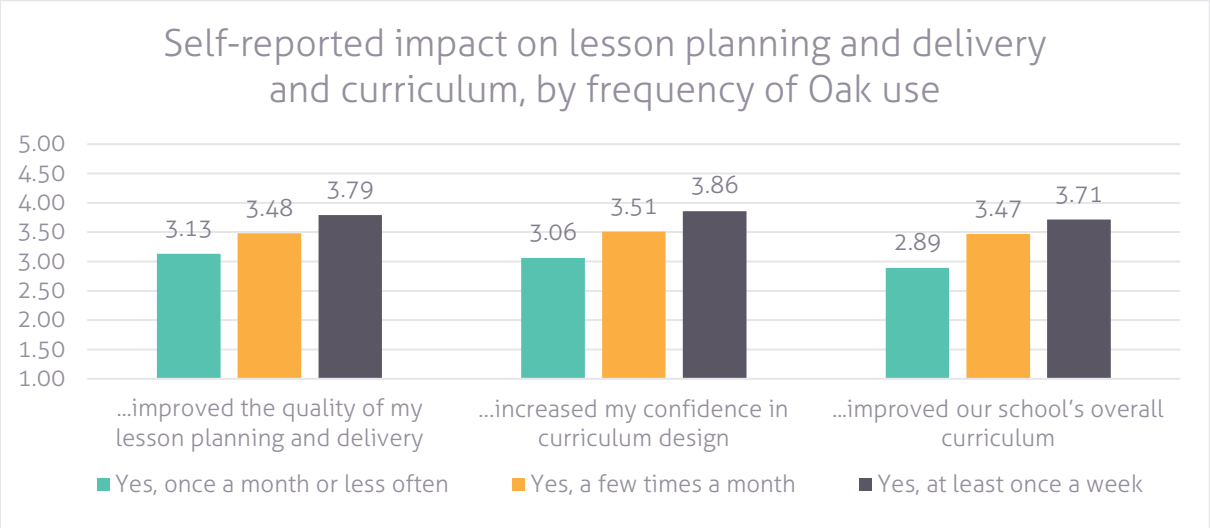


Figure 17: Oak users' responses to three statements about the impact of Oak's curriculum and resources on a scale from 1: Strongly disagree to 5: Strongly agree, by frequency of Oak use

Key finding: Oak is used as a professional development tool especially to support subject knowledge, which is valuable in particular for teachers covering multiple subjects (e.g. in primary schools) and non-subject specialists, including those covering lessons.

Almost half of the qualitative research participants discussed using Oak as a **professional development tool to support their own learning and subject knowledge** in particular, even where they are not using Oak resources directly in their lessons. Based on qualitative research, primary school teachers in particular have found the ideas, content and delivery of subjects such as History or Geography useful in securing their understanding of the topics so that they can deliver the best lessons. One primary school teacher talked about having to prepare to teach a unit on sliders and mechanisms for Design and Technology which she knew nothing about and had no materials for, but she found resources aligned exactly to her needs through Oak which meant that her pupils were able to meet the lesson objectives confidently. Another primary school teacher discussed a Year 6 WW1 topic that she was not confident in teaching, so she relied heavily on the Oak resources to develop her content knowledge to be able to deliver a high-quality lesson. An English teacher reported that when she was unsure about what text to choose for her class while planning, she was able to go onto the Oak website and look through their examples and choose the one which was best suited to her cohort.

> An experienced secondary school languages teacher turned to Oak to support her to deliver high quality Latin grammar lessons. With the new GCSE focus on grammar, she felt that she was lacking inspiration for how to engage pupils with this element. She was "really inspired" by the way in which Oak delivered this element of the curriculum and when her pupils "loved" the lessons and how they were delivered. She found that other resources available were "quite boring" and did not engage the children, whereas Oak related grammar to real-world examples set in current times and made it more fun for pupils.

Interviewees, especially subject specialists themselves, discussed the challenges of not having subject specialists available to deliver lessons. In these scenarios, they reported that using Oak resources was a viable solution to address some of these issues. Some teachers felt that Oak resources are so easy to use that any teacher could pick up an Oak lesson and deliver the content relatively well, whilst others argued that it was preferable that Oak lessons would be taught by subject specialist practitioners in order to avoid misconceptions – but the general agreement was that **where it is unavoidable that non-specialists are teaching lessons, Oak supports their knowledge and understanding** of what they are going to be teaching and avoids pupils missing content altogether.

There was discussion in focus groups around the value of Oak as a resource that should be used to set cover. One Higher Level Teaching Assistant who covers lessons (who used to be a teacher themselves) said that:

> *the majority of the time the cover that I see set for pupils is rubbish, and so I would always go to Oak to make sure they get something better. For example, finishing an art project is not a lesson and how can I teach that?! So I will go on to Oak and find something relevant to this art project and teach that."*

However, several teachers discussed challenges with behaviour for learning when covering lessons using Oak, as discussed further in the following section related to 'impact on pupils'.

Key finding: In focus groups, participants felt that Oak was a good starting point for curriculum development but then adaptation was important; some participants were frustrated by gaps in Oak's curriculum offering.

In relation to curriculum, one teacher discussed in a focus group that **while Oak is good to use as a starting point for curriculum development, it must then be adapted and edited** to meet Ofsted requirements:

> *any off the shelf resources are not going to be reflective of a school's curriculum intent and therefore cannot be used as a whole school curriculum without adaptation to achieve this."*

This staff member felt that using Oak to supplement and develop their curriculum offering is becoming easier as Oak resources have been developed and improved, but her perception was that for the majority of schools this is too late as they have already done the thinking around this and therefore no longer need to develop whole schemes of work.

In another focus group, a participant talked about her **frustrations around gaps in the curriculum offerings** on Oak, especially with Oak's new role as an Arm's Length Body which she felt meant it should cover the entirety of the national curriculum (as set by the government). She felt that Oak didn't cater for some schools and pupils where their specific curriculum content was not covered by Oak's resources. However, this may have been associated with the reductions in resources this year caused by the end of licencing agreements, which will be addressed from Autumn 2023.

Key finding: Oak users and non-users were similarly likely to report an understanding of general knowledge about curriculum intent and sequencing, but Oak users reported more secure understanding than non-users.

All survey respondents (Oak users and non-users) were presented with three statements focusing on their understanding of the curriculum, how it is created and its impact:

- I could explain the 'intent' of our curriculum in my subject(s) or phase(s), if asked
- I could explain how our topics have been selected and sequenced

- I could explain how our curriculum leads to pupils making progress in line with expectations

For all three statements, respondents selected one of the following four options: "No", "Yes, somewhat", "Yes, mostly", and "Yes, completely". When reporting on averages later in this section, these responses have been converted to numerical values 1-4, where "No" = 1 and "Yes, completely" =4. The responses of Oak users and non-users have been compared (using matched groups) to identify any differences in understanding of the curriculum that could be associated with using Oak. Where possible, we have compared with responses from national surveys of teachers throughout this section.

In response to the statement "I could explain the 'intent' of our curriculum in my subject(s) or phase(s), if asked", the mean response from users was 3.13 and for non-users it was 3.07, demonstrating that users are slightly more confident in this area than non-users (this difference was not statistically significant).

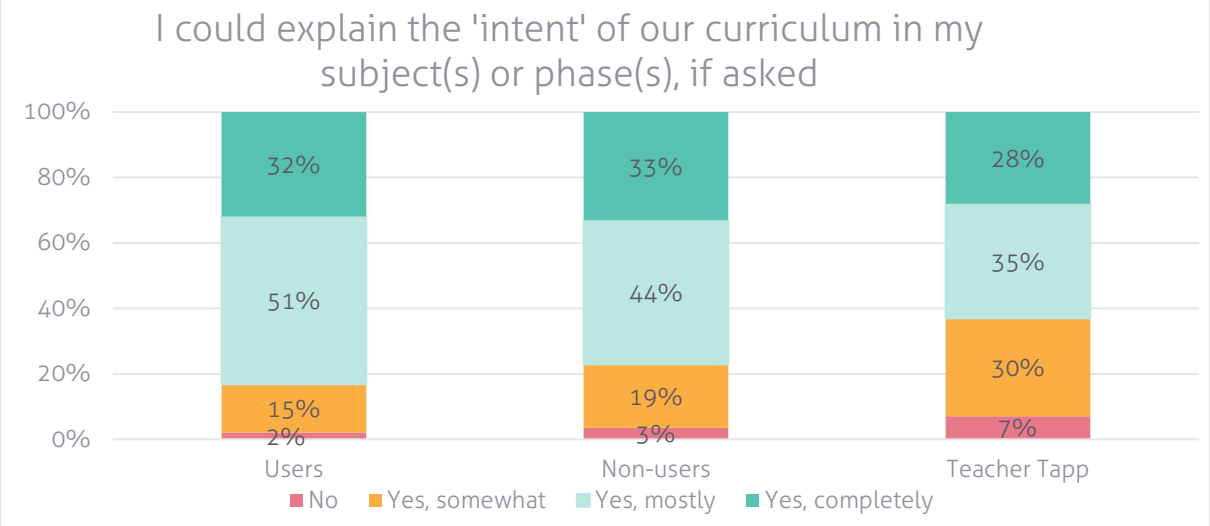


Figure 18: Responses to the statement 'I could explain the 'intent' of our curriculum in my subject(s) or phase(s), if asked', with respondents able to select one of four options, comparing Oak users (n=429) to non-users (n=429) and to the Teacher Tapp survey[12], conducted January 2022 with 6,605 teachers (results of Teacher Tapp survey weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

The percentage of users answering with the top two most positive answers ("Yes, completely" and "Yes, mostly") was 6.05 percentage points greater than non-users, suggesting that using **Oak contributes to having more than just a basic understanding of the 'intent' of the curriculum to a statistically significant degree.**

The next statement that respondents had to consider was "I could explain how our topics have been selected and sequenced". Looking at the mean response, users and non-users had very similar scores (3.04 to 3.00, not a statistically significant difference) but there are 4.42 percentage points more users than non-users responding with the top two most positive answers ("Yes, completely" and "Yes, mostly"), which again suggests that using Oak

[12] Teacher Tapp, January 2022. 'Did teachers get yelled at by parents more often during the pandemic? (This week's findings...)'

helps staff achieve those higher levels of understanding around sequencing although this difference was not statistically significant.

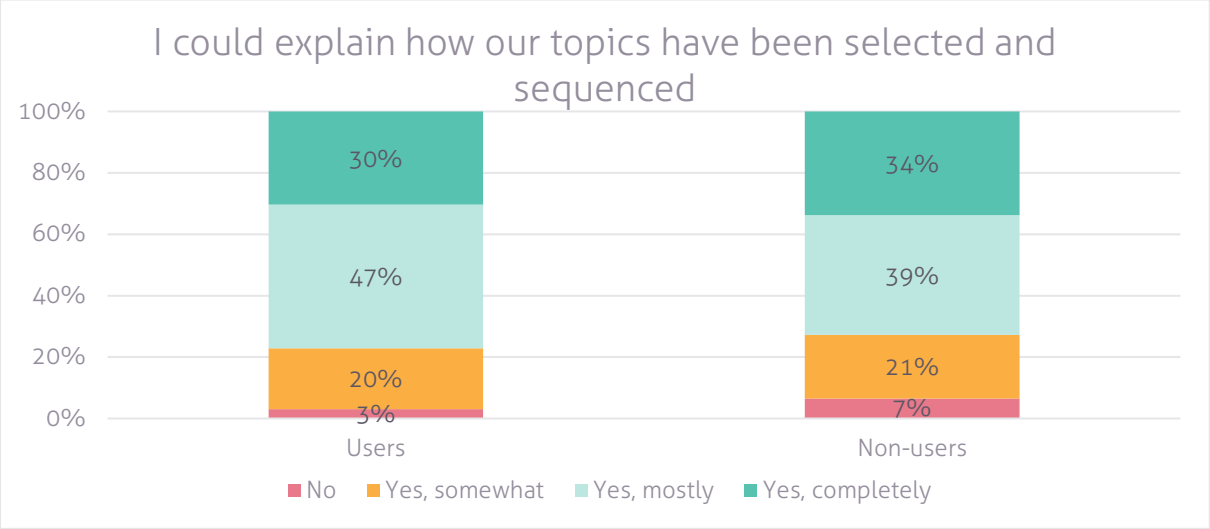


Figure 19: Responses to the statement 'I could explain how our topics have been selected and sequenced', with respondents able to select one of four options, comparing Oak users (n=429) to non-users (n=429)

The final statement in this set was how much staff agreed with the statement "I could explain how our curriculum leads to pupils making progress in line with expectations". Oak users had the mean response of 3.08 whilst non-users had the mean response of 2.99, so users once again came up as slightly ahead than non-user (not a statistically significant difference). Users responded with the top 2 most positive answers ("Yes, completely" and "Yes, mostly") 5.13 percentage points more than non-users also indicating that Oak has helped them understand how the curriculum leads to pupils making progress in line with expectations, although this was not a statistically significant difference.

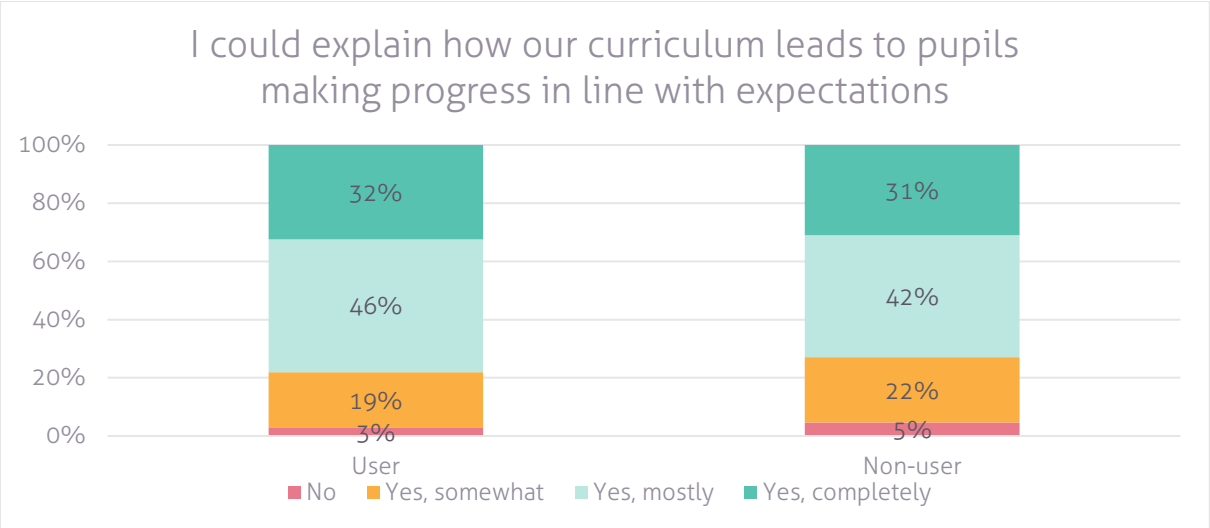


Figure 20: Responses to the statement 'I could explain how our curriculum leads to pupils making progress in line with expectations', with respondents able to select one of four options, comparing Oak users (n=429) to non-users (n=429)

Quality of the resources

Key finding: Oak users rate the quality of Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure and teacher resources as above average but below 'high' quality. Those who use Oak more frequently have more positive perceptions of quality.

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. On average, respondents scored both elements 3.65, **above an 'average' score but below 'high' quality** (a score of 4). Unsurprisingly, quality scores increased with frequency of Oak usage – meaning those who use Oak more often are likely to have more positive perceptions of quality than those who use Oak less often.

The survey asked users for suggestions on how Oak resources could be improved and many of those who responded to this question stated that improving the quality of resources would be desirable, with more specific suggestions on how to improve quality outlined below.

Key finding: From qualitative research, Oak is seen as user-friendly and providing useful resources which can inspire teachers to create their own lessons or be easily adapted – and that this is available to teachers at no cost is valuable.

In qualitative research, the majority of teachers talked about how the website was **easy to use** and how they could find the resources that they needed to support their lessons. Most teachers celebrated the fact that these resources are free and provide a high-quality resource which teachers can use to **inspire their own lessons or adapt to their own cohorts.** One primary school teacher described the range of resources as "absolutely fantastic"; she felt that she could go on to the website and find whatever she needed to inspire her, especially if she was feeling quite overwhelmed. One secondary school Science teacher said:

> *There is a safety to the resources, I know that I can just go to them and they will do what I need them to do."*

A common theme throughout the focus groups was that teachers who are using Oak resources regularly feel that they are **very easy to adapt and personalise and therefore make relevant to their diverse cohorts** (which will be examined further in the next section under 'impact on pupils'). A Latin teacher talked about how other schemes of work they had been using had become quite old and lacked the grammar element she was looking for so she now defaults to Oak all the time. She feels that because it is so easy to use she is able to pick and choose from the resources and adapt them according to her needs.

The **quality of resources was perceived to have improved over time** by users in focus groups – although in reality the resources themselves have not changed. One teacher said that she initially found the resources "boring" and felt that they were "aimed at top private schools" and not age appropriate for the pupils she taught. She discussed that when she revisited the resources in the last few months, her opinions had changed. She wanted to "spice things up" in a unit she was planning, and found that she was able to use Oak's resources as a springboard for new ideas. She said:

> *I feel that initially Oak didn't take into consideration the diversity of the children in schools and they are now moving away from this and there is more I can pick and choose from. For example, I may use 5 out of 14 slides, but it is now more representative of our diverse needs".*

Another focus group participant echoed her feelings of initially finding the content "dry" and "a bit hit and miss" but perceived it to have improved over time. It may be that how teachers are using the resources has changed over time which has changed their perceptions of resources, although this was unclear from the discussions themselves.

In multiple focus groups, participants discussed that Oak is a **free resource** for teachers as opposed to other paid websites and subscriptions. Where teachers were paying for other resources they felt that Oak provided higher quality resources at no cost. One teacher said:

> *although I am not poverty stricken I was spending a good amount of money on subscriptions to try and get good resources and save me time so this has saved me lots of money. Not only that but it has allowed me to think about my lessons differently and perform my job better."*

In fact, in group discussions when areas for improvement for Oak were discussed, other teachers were quick to remind their peers that Oak was a high-quality, free resource.

Key finding: Areas of improvement for Oak included improving the quality of resources, having a wider variety of resources available, making resources more adaptable, and improving schools' awareness of resources available.

Areas of improvement identified or discussed by teachers in focus groups and through responses to a qualitative survey question of users included:

- **Improve the quality of Oak resources,** with specific suggestions including wanting resources to be more engaging, more interactive, and less repetitive. Some respondents specified that they wanted resources with better examples, modelling and diagrams, and for the resources to be more accurate, and less generic.
- **Increasing schools' awareness of the resources available** to them through Oak – through the survey, respondents expressed that they thought that Oak should do more to advertise their resources to schools both in increasing awareness that they exist at all but also making it clear what range of resources are available to teachers. Additionally, it was evident from incorrect comments about desirable improvements

outlined below that users are sometimes unaware of what is available already to them.

- Having a wider variety of resources both in terms of 'classroom ready' resources and subjects available came out through qualitative survey comments. Respondents reported that they wanted more printable resources and worksheets. They also suggested swapping some videos for PowerPoint presentations – although this is actually already a feature that is available (as a download from one section of the website), and so it is likely desirable to increase awareness of this amongst users. In terms of subjects, the following were mentioned as subjects that respondents would like to see more resources available for: Food Technology, Art, Dance, Drama, Film, Media, GCSE English Language, EFYS, A-Level Psychology, RE, and more general teacher training.
- Making resources more adaptable was frequently mentioned through the survey. Some users want resources to be more scaffolded but more flexible in the way they could be used, so that teachers could use an individual question or section. They also mentioned that they wanted more resources to be used for pupils who were finding a topic too hard or too easy as well as resources that could be used when teaching mixed age-group classes.
- How to find relevant topics with a large amount of content and resources available – there were mixed opinions in focus group discussions over whether grouping resources by age group was beneficial or not. One teacher suggested having an individual log in would allow you to tailor your searches and the website could show you likely matches. A small number of respondents mentioned that a curriculum map of resources available through Oak would be helpful so they could visualise the links between units, although this actually already exists and so increasing visibility of this on the website and beyond would be an appropriate improvement.
- Having more resources for pupils with SEND came out of both the survey and qualitative research; in qualitative research, teachers reported that these have been really beneficial for pupils (particularly those with ASD highlighted) so having more available would be useful. This applied to both supporting pupils with SEND in mainstream schools as well as specific support for specialist schools.

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

Those who had not used Oak this year but had heard of Oak were asked why they chose not to use Oak National Academy's resources and could choose multiple responses. The most frequently stated reasons that school staff did not use Oak resources were that they already had lots of resources and thinking that Oak resources are suitable for emergency use only – around a quarter of non-users selected each. Oak National Academy's curriculum not being aligned with a school curriculum was the reason that was least stated as being the blocker to using Oak. Only 9% respondents stated that their school had not allowed them to use it.

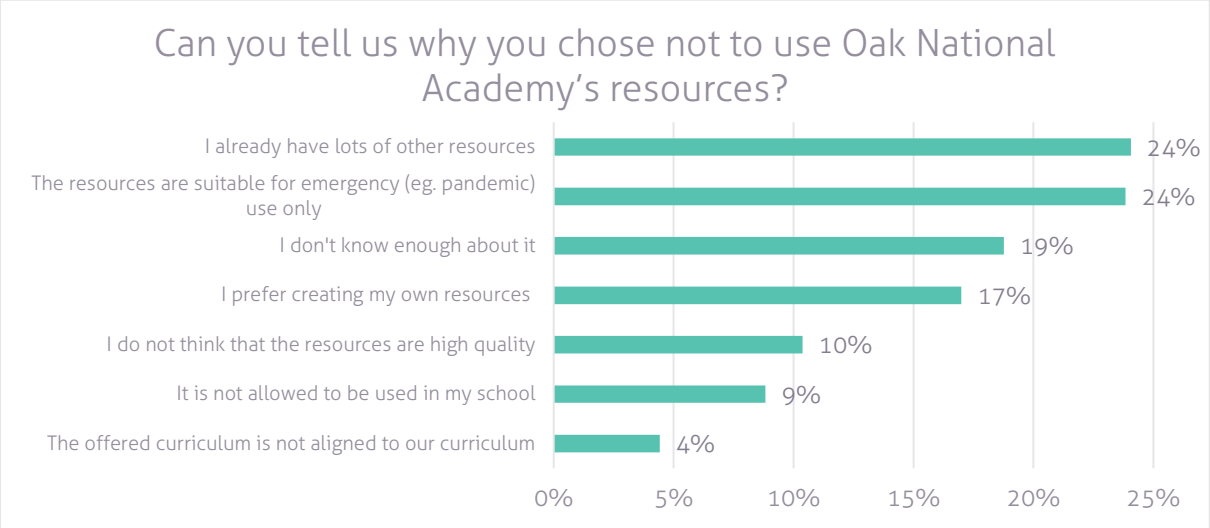


Figure 21: Reasons selected by non-Oak users in the current academic year 2022/23 who had heard of Oak previously as to why they chose not to use Oak resources, multiple choice selection (n=453)

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 they didn't know enough about it. In comparison, secondary school users were more likely to report that they preferred creating their own resources or that the offered curriculum is not aligned to their school's curriculum.

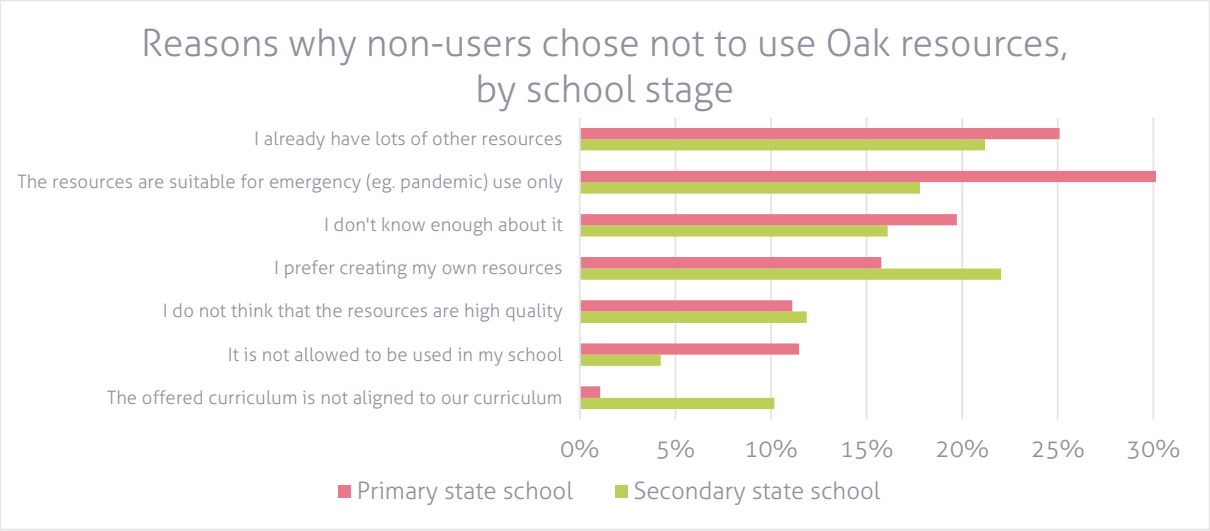


Figure 22: Reasons selected by non-Oak users in the current academic year 2022/23 who had heard of Oak previously as to why they chose not to use Oak resources, multiple choice selection, comparing primary state school respondents (n=279) to secondary state school respondents (n=118)

When examining differences between reasons for not using Oak associated with respondents' school governance model, non-users from Local Authority Maintained schools were more likely to respond that Oak is not allowed to be used in their school than those from academies. Those working in Multi-Academy Trusts were more likely to say they

preferred creating their own resources or think Oak was suitable for emergency use only. Respondents from independent, special and other governance models were excluded from this analysis due to small response numbers.

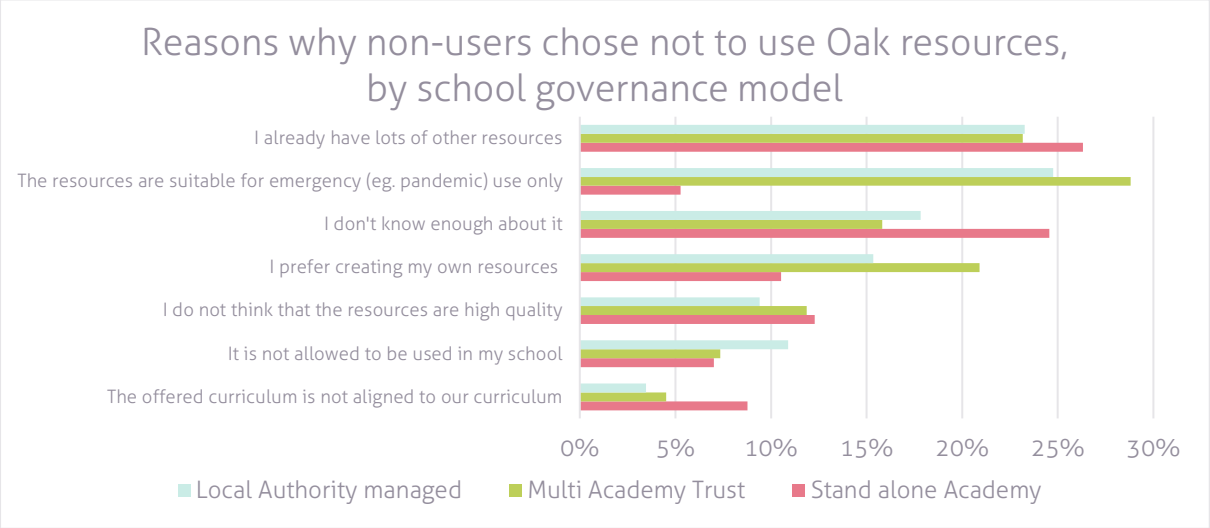


Figure 23: Reasons selected by non-Oak users in the current academic year 2022/23 who had heard of Oak previously as to why they chose not to use Oak resources, multiple choice selection, comparing respondents from Local Authority managed schools (n=202), respondents from schools in Multi-Academy Trusts (n=177) and respondents from Stand alone Academy schools (n=57)

5. Impact on pupils

Key findings:

1. Oak users reported that higher proportions of their pupils were exceeding expectations than non-users to a statistically significant degree, and lower proportions of their pupils were behind expectations than non-users (although this was not statistically significant).
2. Qualitatively, Oak users found it challenging to directly attribute academic progress to their use of Oak but some participants provided examples of how Oak had contributed to progress for individuals or groups of pupils.
3. Oak resources support pupils who are not able in lessons to still have access to relevant content, which is an asset with continuing challenges around pupil attendance and for pupils who are excluded or isolated.
4. Teachers who communicate with parents and carers about Oak believe this has a positive impact on parents and carers' ability to engage with and support their child's learning, which positively impacts on pupils learning and school engagement.
5. Pupils' willingness to engage with Oak's resources in some cases has decreased, potentially due to an association with school closures and online learning.
6. Teachers find Oak a particularly beneficial resource for pupils with Special Educational Needs (both within mainstream settings and special schools) as pupils respond well to the structure, can revisit content as often as they need to and work at their own pace, and resources can be printed in front of them.

Academic performance

Key finding: Oak users reported that higher proportions of their pupils were exceeding expectations than non-users to a statistically significant degree, and lower proportions of their pupils were behind expectations than non-users (although this was not statistically significant).

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 have been 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 20% intervals (0-19%, 20-39%, 40-59% etc).

The results generally showed that **Oak users were more positive about their pupils' academic performance than non users**, as demonstrated in the graph below. Users reported on average that 40.5% of their pupils were exceeding expectations compared to non-users reporting that 28.8% of their pupils were exceeding expectations – where a higher proportion is more positive – a difference that was statistically significant. Thinking about the proportion of pupils below expectations, where a lower proportion is more positive, users reported on average that 33.3% of their pupils were working behind expectations compared to non-users' reports of 35.2% of their pupils behind expectations – although this was not a statistically significant difference.

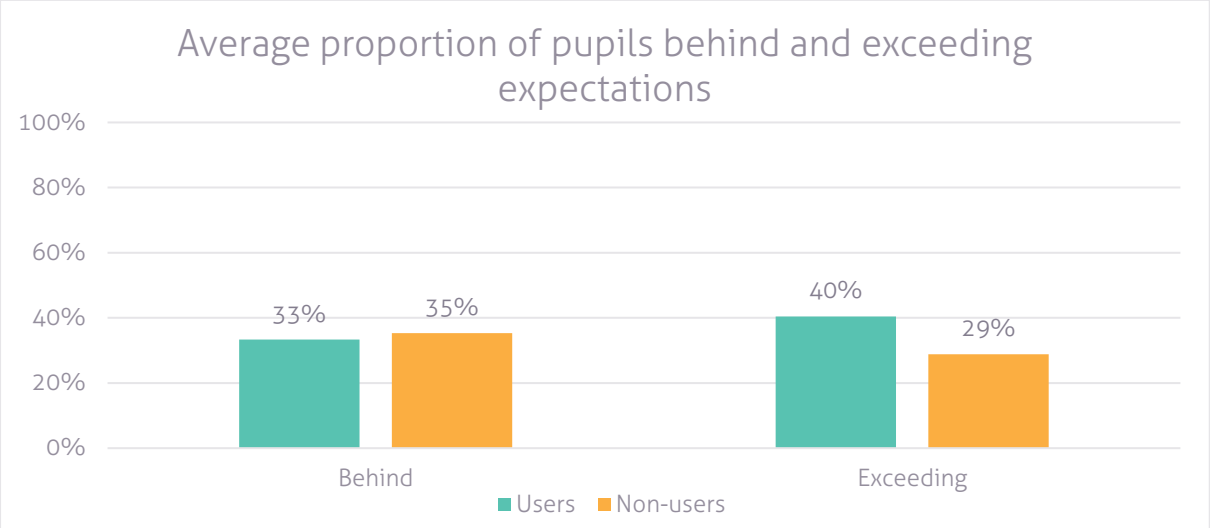
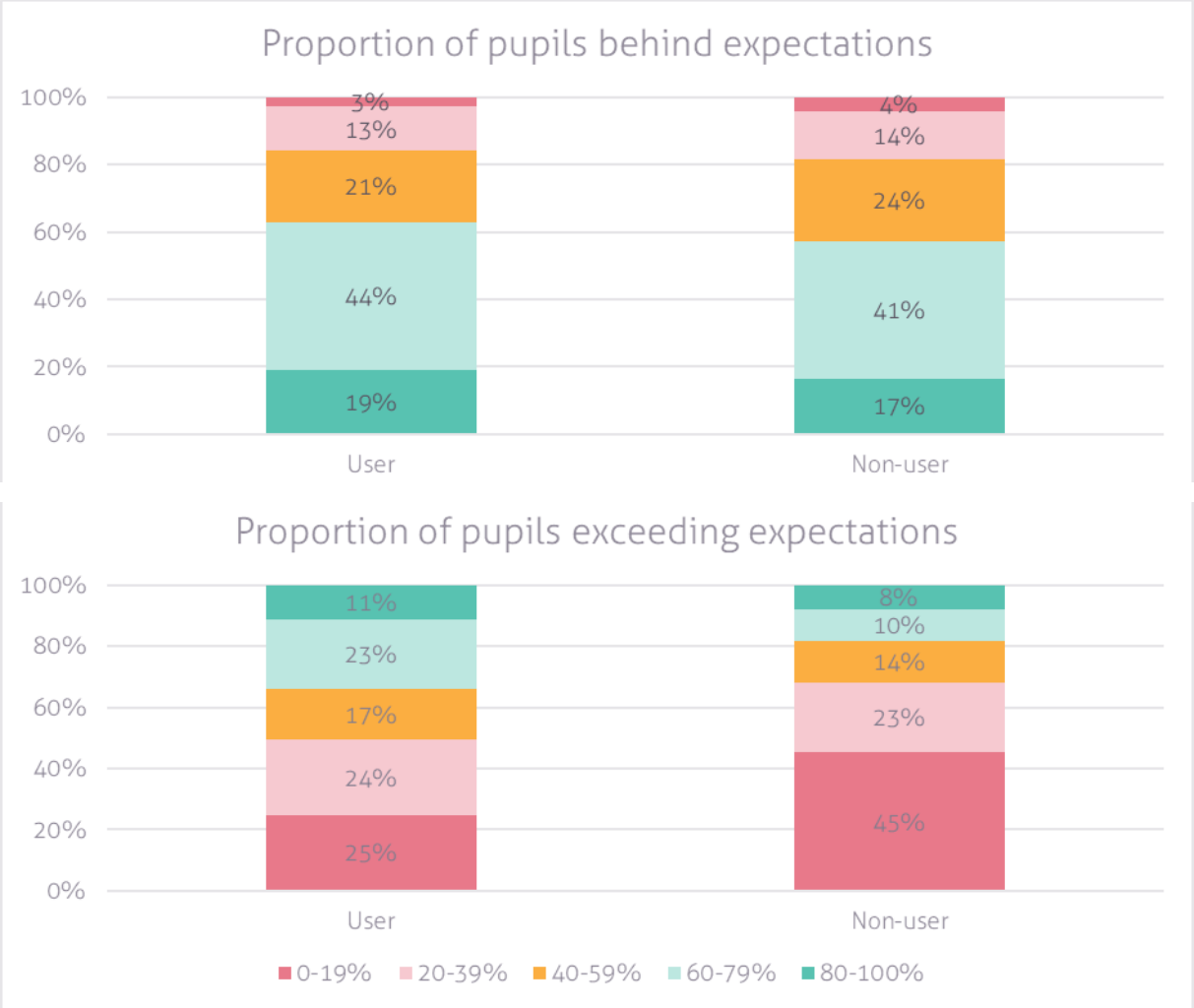


Figure 24: Mean proportion of pupils that matched Oak users and non-users reported as being behind and exceeding expectations

When breaking the responses down further, you can see from the following two graphs that Oak users reported lower proportions of pupils behind expectations and higher proportions of pupils exceeding expectations.



Figures 25 & 26: Proportion of pupils that matched Oak users and non-users reported as being behind and exceeding expectations, grouped into 20% intervals

Key finding: Qualitatively, Oak users found it challenging to directly attribute academic progress to their use of Oak but some participants provided examples of how Oak had contributed to progress for individuals or groups of pupils.

Most participants were unable to give one specific example about how Oak resources have directly impacted on pupils' progress and felt that this was **difficult to pinpoint because it is often down to a wide range of factors and resources**.

However, some examples of how progress for individual or groups of pupils were linked to Oak resources were shared by teachers.

One primary school Assistant Headteacher discussed how they use Oak resources only in Upper Key Stage 2 to provide revision support at home. She said during the Covid-19 pandemic related school closures, children were really engaged with the resources because they were so keen to learn, however her recent cohort is very different and less mature and

so are not as motivated by them. However, she feels that her current higher attainers have benefitted from the resources because when she sets reading tasks using Oak, once they complete them they explore different activities and then come in and talk to her about what they have learnt, especially in terms of **vocabulary**. She also feels that the resources are supporting her "on the cusp" children to **consolidate their knowledge and revisit any areas where there are gaps**.

One primary school French teacher states that she has been "astounded by the change in our French achievements through using Oak." She talked about how the **structure and style of the lessons has really engaged** her pupils and after using the Oak scheme of work for a whole year believes the results are the best they have had. She talked about how her secondary colleagues commented on the amount and quality of pupils' knowledge and how set up they are to learn French when they enter secondary school. She stated that:

> *I would never go back now, they know what the routines are and even though the lessons are only 25 minutes we are getting so much more done. Even the SEND pupils who normally don't access lessons, I would say that one of them is now nearly the top of the class as they have found it so easy to follow and accessible!"*

Key finding: Oak resources support pupils who are not able in lessons to still have access to relevant content, which is an asset with continuing challenges around pupil attendance and for pupils who are excluded or isolated.

Throughout the focus groups, teachers discussed using Oak resources to support pupils who were not in lessons for a variety of reasons. Teachers feel that as **pupil attendance continues to be a challenge in school,** they do not have enough time to make sure that all lessons are adequately covered so **by using Oak when pupils are off they are confident that their pupils are having access to high quality resources which support their learning**. If pupils were off sick for any length of time, most participants stated that they would be able to set work through Oak which predominantly aligns with their own school curriculums to make sure that they do not miss lesson content. Similarly, when pupils are excluded or in isolation teachers use Oak to set work so that they can make sure although they are not in the lesson they are completing work to meet the same learning objectives as their peers.

One primary school teacher discussed the fact that they have large numbers of Romani, Polish and Pakistani pupils who often travel overseas to visit family for long periods of time. The school sets Oak work for pupils during these periods as "through no fault of their own, their parents are not able to access or understand the curriculum but do not want their children to fall behind." They set Oak lessons therefore to make sure that their pupils continue to have access to the curriculum and do not fall so far behind during these periods of extended leave.

One participant teaches Science and Maths in a special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. With small numbers of pupils in the school, they are unable to have subject specialists teaching every subject. He discussed how many of their pupils are unlikely to achieve a GCSE at the end of their time at school but that they work hard to support them achieving the best they can. However, the school identified two pupils who would be capable of achieving a Maths GCSE; without Oak they would not be able to support the teaching of this without a Maths GCSE curriculum in place. They have relied solely on Oak to provide these two pupils with suitable lessons and resources they need to help them work towards their GCSE. As a result they are now accessing this curriculum and able to work through the videos and resources independently.

Key finding: Teachers who communicate with parents and carers about Oak believe this has a positive impact on parents and carers' ability to engage with and support their child's learning, which positively impacts on pupils learning and school engagement.

Although the majority of participants were not able to quantify the impact of Oak resources on their pupils, many talked about how using Oak supports them to engage with parents and carers. Where they are now able to send out links or direct them to resources (including videos), teachers feel that parents are more engaged with their child's learning which they believe has a positive impact on their child. Teachers felt that they were able to direct parents and carers to resources which demonstrate not only what they are teaching but also how, and therefore they have become more confident to engage actively with their child's learning. This increased engagement has positively impacted on pupils' feelings about their learning and their behaviour within class, and allowed parents and carers to more effectively support their children at home.

Key finding: Pupils' willingness to engage with Oak's resources in some cases has decreased, potentially due to an association with school closures and online learning.

Multiple focus group participants talked about a sense of pupil fatigue setting in with regards to Oak resources. One teacher reported that during cover lessons, if an Oak lesson is used the behaviour of the pupils declines whilst another talked about pupils "groaning" when seeing an Oak lesson. Teachers felt that rather than this being a reflection on the resources themselves, it was more to do with an association with school closures and home learning. She felt that many pupils, particularly in secondary school, associate Oak lessons with online learning and much prefer now being in a classroom environment being taught by their own teacher.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Key finding: Teachers find Oak a particularly beneficial resource for pupils with Special Educational Needs (both within mainstream settings and special schools) as pupils respond well to the structure, can revisit content as often as they need to and work at their own pace, and resources can be printed in front of them.

In focus groups, teachers spoke in particular about how Oak has been a useful resource in supporting their pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) for various reasons.

Two teachers from special schools for pupils with a variety of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs felt that Oak resources were particularly useful in supporting their SEND pupils because of the **repetitive nature of the resources** and the fact that they can **revisit them as often as they need to**.

> One teacher who worked in a specialist nurture setting where pupils are unlikely to return to mainstream school stated that she has used the resources more consistently in the last two years because she has been surprised at how well her pupils responded to the structure of the resources during Covid-19 related school closures.
>
> She works in a very small school where behaviour for learning is often very poor and they have found that the ability to stop and start lessons to give pupils breaks has been really beneficial. She stated that she has been shocked at how well they have responded to this structured style of learning. Furthermore, the ease with which teachers can download and absorb the content of the lessons has had a positive impact on their workload and wellbeing. For these reasons, they have continued to use the resources and use them more now than they did in periods of school closures.

Teachers working in mainstream schools also discussed how Oak resources were beneficial in supporting their pupils with SEND. One secondary school Science specialist said that she would print off Oak Powerpoints and resources and give them to her SEND and lower attaining pupils which has really helped them as they are able to **work at their own pace** and revisit the input as often as they need to. Another teacher felt that a pupil within her class with dyslexia really benefited from having the **resources printed off in front of them** because it removed the anxiety of the information on the screen changing before she had a chance to absorb it.

6. Conclusion and next steps

Summary of findings

Oak National Academy continues to be widely used by teachers and pupils across all types of schools in England in order to plan and deliver lessons, plan curricula, set cover lessons and work for absent pupils, and as a professional development tool.

Based on a survey of Oak users and non-users, Oak users reported working a mean of 31.5 hours compared to 42 hours a week for non-users – a difference that was statistically significant – with most notable benefits in terms of workload for those who use Oak a few times a month or more and for senior leaders.[13] Oak users had more positive perceptions of their workload than non-users to a statistically significant degree.

40% of Oak users said that using Oak had decreased their workload with an average time saved of 4 hours per week, 54% said that using Oak had not impacted their workload and the remaining 6% said using Oak had increased their workload (with an average of 7 hours per week added). In qualitative research, participants reported using time saved through using Oak on feedback, assessment and supporting pupils directly instead.

Wellbeing scores for Oak users were higher (meaning better wellbeing) than non-users (43.76 compared to 40.65), a difference which was statistically significant. Both users and non-users' scores were lower (poorer wellbeing) in Summer 2023 than the overall education workforce average from 2022 (44.01).

The proportion of Oak users who anticipated they would no longer be working in education in two years' time was notably lower than non-users – 9% compared to 29% - and also compared favourably to a national benchmark where 16% of education professionals anticipated they would no longer be working in education.

As a result of using Oak, most frequently survey respondents reported that they had swapped or added certain lessons based on Oak's curricula, followed by changing how they sequence their curriculum, as opposed to using Oak as their main curriculum sequence. Around half of users agreed that Oak's curriculum and resources have improved the quality of their lesson planning, increased their confidence in curriculum design and improved their school's overall curriculum. Oak is used as a professional development tool especially to support subject knowledge, which is valuable in particular for teachers covering multiple subjects (e.g. in primary schools) and non-subject specialists, including those covering lessons.

In focus groups, participants felt that Oak was a good starting point for curriculum development but then adaptation was important; some participants were frustrated by gaps

[13] It is not possible to compare this data to national benchmarks due to differences in the methodology related to full/part time working.

in Oak's curriculum offering. Oak users and non-users were similarly likely to report an understanding of general knowledge about curriculum intent and sequencing, but Oak users reported more secure understanding than non-users.

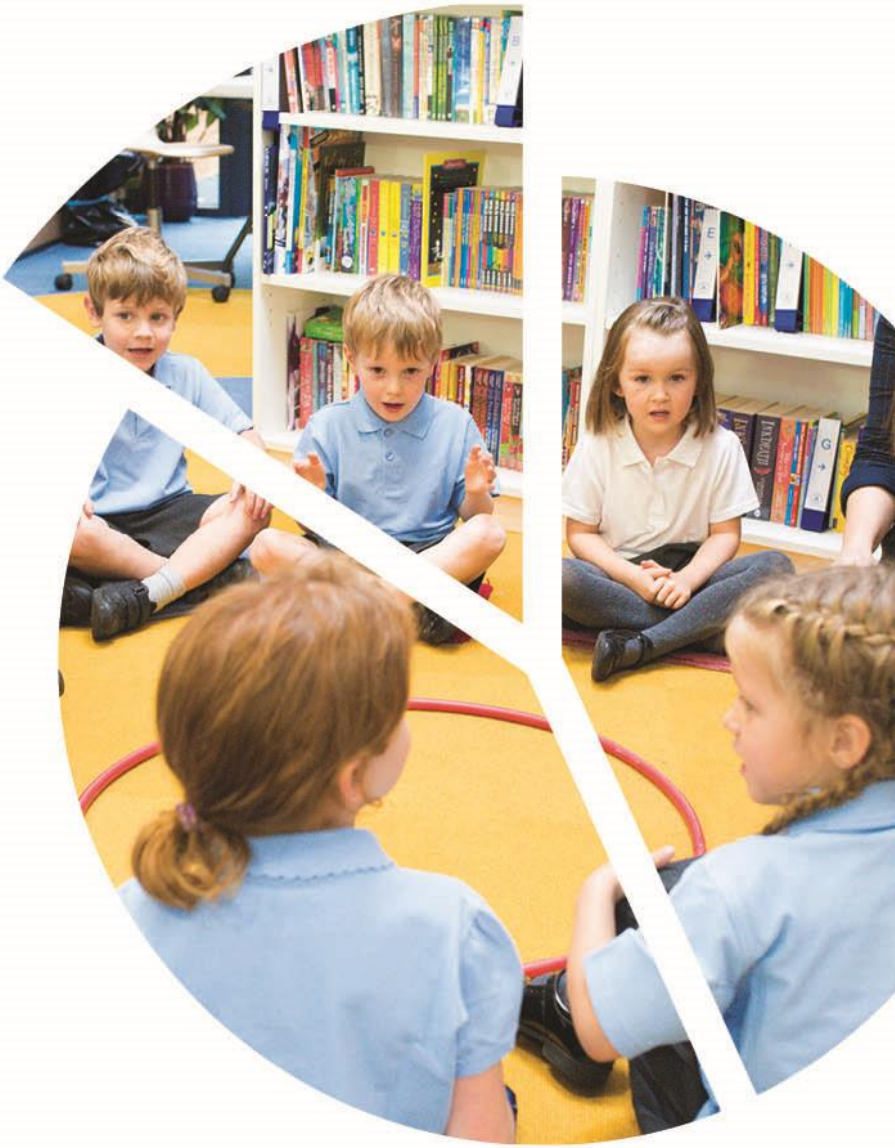
Oak users rate the quality of Oak's curriculum sequencing and structure and teacher resources as above average but below 'high' quality. Those who use Oak more frequently have more positive perceptions of quality. From qualitative research, Oak is seen as user-friendly and providing useful resources which can inspire teachers to create their own lessons or be easily adapted – and that this is available to teachers at no cost is valuable.

The most frequently stated reasons non-users provided for not using Oak resources were already having lots of resources and thinking that Oak resources are suitable for emergency use only.

Oak users reported that higher proportions of their pupils were exceeding expectations than non-users to a statistically significant degree, and lower proportions of their pupils were behind expectations than non-users (although this was not statistically significant). Qualitatively, Oak users found it challenging to directly attribute academic progress to their use of Oak but some participants provided examples of how Oak had contributed to progress for individuals or groups of pupils. Oak resources support pupils who are not able in lessons to still have access to relevant content, which is an asset with continuing challenges around pupil attendance and for pupils who are excluded or isolated.

Teachers who communicate with parents and carers about Oak believe this has a positive impact on parents and carers' ability to engage with and support their child's learning, which positively impacts on pupils learning and school engagement. Pupils' willingness to engage with Oak's resources in some cases has decreased, potentially due to an association with school closures and online learning.

Teachers find Oak a particularly beneficial resource for pupils with Special Educational Needs (both within mainstream settings and special schools) as pupils respond well to the structure, can revisit content as often as they need to and work at their own pace, and resources can be printed in front of them.



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