

Board minutes

12 October 2023

Minutes

Board meeting

Time and venue

16.00 - Coram Campus

Date

12 October 2023

Attendees

Board/committee member

Ian Bauckham CBE	IB	Chair
Sean Harford	SH	
Cassie Buchanan	CB	
Ramender Crompton	RB	
Henry de Zoete	HdZ	
Matt Hood	MH	Chief Executive
Emma Beatty	EB	Operations Director

Oak National Academy

Will Gayne	WG	Head of Product Strategy
Jonathan Dando	JD	School Support and External Relations Director
Tom Rose	TR	Education Director
John Roberts	JR	Product and Engineering Director
Ellie Ball	EIB	Board Secretary

Observers

Jacquie Spatcher	JS	Department for Education
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Apologies

Stuart Miller	SM	Department for Education
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1. Welcome, apologies and declarations

- 1.1. Attendees were welcomed to the meeting by the committee Chair, noting apologies from Stuart Miller who asked Jacquie Spatcher to attend in his place
- 1.2. Henry de Zoete reiterated a declaration of interest related to his position as Advisor to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister on AI

2. Minutes, matters arising and electronic decisions taken between meetings

- 2.1. Minutes from the previous Board meeting held on 8th June 2023 were reviewed with agreement from the Board to approve, subject to one change to Henry de Zoete's declaration of interest. This has since been updated in the minutes.

DECISION: Minutes from the Board meeting 08/06/23 were approved.

- 2.2. Electronic decisions taken between 8th June 2023 and 12th October 2023 were reviewed and it was agreed that these decisions were to be ratified.

DECISION: Electronic decisions taken between meetings were ratified.

3. CEO Update

- 3.1. The Board discussed the CEO update, noting recent successes including the launch of the new platform, Cycle 2 procurement and the third annual independent evaluation report.
- 3.2. The Board reviewed the final position for the June 2023 - October 2023 OKR period, noting successes in the KR's rated 'Achieved' and 'Near Miss'. The Oak team clarified that data for the KR related to Weekly Active Users was still pending and took an action to follow up on this after the meeting. *Note: The Board was informed by email following the meeting that this KR was fully achieved*
- 3.3. The Board considered the proposed OKRs for October 2023 - February 2024 period.
- 3.4. The Board discussed the reduction in the OfficeVibe health metric and the reasons behind this drop, questioning if remote working was playing a role. The Oak team noted that the team has regular in person-meetings but acknowledged that steep growth in the team size had meant some people were still getting up to speed with the cultural norms, and that a busy OKR period had impacted this.
- 3.5. The Board discussed copyright and the proposed solution of producing a 'semi-skimmed' version of lessons where copyright is unavailable. MH confirmed that this solution does not impact the quality, balance or diversity of the curriculum.

4. FARC report

- 4.1. EB introduced the item, confirming the two decisions made at the Committee re P6 forecast and the retrospective reduction of the budget envelope.
- 4.2. The Board discussed the risk management strategy and risk appetite work, noting improvements to the processes.
- 4.3. The Board discussed an error in the Articles of Association, related to the preparation of annual accounts in accordance with the Charities Act. MH proposed an amend to the AoA to correct this error, confirming that making this amend would not impact the timeline of the NAO audit. The Board noted potential risk of resistance from the Reach Foundation, and possible press interest.

DECISION: The Board approved the recommended approach to amending the Articles of Association, noting that the DfE would also need to formally approve this decision

5. Rem & HR committee report

- 5.1. The Board discussed the report, noting Committee decisions to approve the approach to the consolidated pay award, to delay re-harmonising Oak's pay award to our financial year, and to increase in NED from £300 per day to £316 per day.
- 5.2. The Board also discussed the approach to senior team pay using Senior Civil Servant pay guidance. The Board agreed with this approach.
- 5.3. The Board discussed the proposal to use the additional 0.5% award for the lowest paid band, agreeing with this approach.
- 5.4. The team noted challenges embedding culture in a growing team, discussing new initiatives being put in place in coming months to help this, including a session focussed on culture at the next offsite and whole team feedback training. The Board discussed external review of culture undertaken by Investors in People, and the recommendations from the review. Members noted the need to formalise systems and process in the context of a growing organisation.
- 5.5. The Board discussed the annual report and accounts process, confirming a final draft was shared with RemCo and FARC and that there will be an additional meeting in November, alongside electronic decisions later in the year, to finalise the report

6. Product Committee report

- 6.1. The Board discussed the launch of the new AI tool, teacher platform and curriculum visualiser, which were live after the product committee meeting.
- 6.2. The Board discussed growth, with a focus on the new OKR and individual goals for squads. Members noted that the biggest barrier to growth to date has been previous content being taken down and not replaced, but that the Oak team are planning for significant amounts of product marketing in the new period, alongside the release of new content.

- 6.3. JR updated on the successful progress in the AI project, noting that since the last Board meeting the tool is now live and being used by teachers. Members discussed importance of gathering feedback and monitoring responses carefully to avoid inappropriate content and check factual and pedagogical correctness. They also noted that phase 1 of the project is targetted to end at the the end of October, with phase 2 of the project, including budget and headcount, still being scoped with the DfE. The Board agreed with the recommendation to extend phase 1 to allow progress to continue whilst the team navigate phase 2.
- 6.4. CB suggested connecting with the workload reduction taskforce's AI and technology subgroup to share expertise. Oak confirmed they are working with the DfE to share knowledge and functionality.
- 6.5. The Board discussed the release of new content, reflecting on the process so far and noting that whilst Oak has proved that they can release new things quickly and iterate them well, the procurement can at times slow the lesson creation process down. Whilst frustrating, MH reiterated the benefits of procurement and working with the sector to create content. Members recommended revisiting the approach ahead of any future phases.
- 6.6. The Board discussed using third party organisations to help drive growth of the product, particularly working with ITT providers. MH confirmed Oak are seeking feedback from these organisations to see how they can integrate.

7. Curriculum Committee report

- 7.1. The Board discussed the launch of Cycle 1 content and the success of the majority of partners, also noting some risks with smaller partners where conversations have been escalated and Oak are taking more control over processes and operational aspects of the project.
- 7.2. TR discussed quality assurance, noting that whilst there have been some delays in getting the correct processes and training in place, these gaps are being urgently addressed to bring everyone up to standard. The Board discussed the mechanism for gathering feedback from teachers as the products are developed, noting that Oak have conducted surveys to a cross section of teachers which has improved quality standards
- 7.3. The Board discussed progress with Cycle 2 procurement, noting that there is already good interest from suppliers.

8. Signposting

- 8.1. JD introduced the paper, giving context for setting the original signposting KPI and explaining Oak's recommendation to delay achieving it until the next financial year.
- 8.2. The Board discussed the benefits of delaying the KPI, including creating a better quality product and more time for stakeholder engagement. They discussed the need to ensure fairness in the process and potential risks of

proceeding without further discussion with stakeholders and suppliers. They also noted the potential impact on team capacity and the knock-on implication for other strategic priorities if the team work towards the KPI this year.

DECISION: The Board agreed to approve missing the KPI for publication by April, to allow for greater publisher engagement and user engagement, noting that the DfE would also need to formally approve this decision. *Note: DfE have now formally approved this decision*

[The meeting ended at 18.14]