

OAK NATIONAL ACADEMY

End of Term Report
Insights and Reflections
from Oak's First Term



What is Oak National Academy?

The story so far

Oak National Academy (Oak) is a collective response from teachers to address the ongoing challenges posed by coronavirus. We offer schools and pupils online lessons and resources to support both learning in the classroom and lessons from home. Oak is a free, optional, resource for any teacher that wants to use it. The platform is easy to use, with no logins and works on any device. Oak will be here for all of 2020/21 to support schools and pupils. We are part of the Reach Foundation charity.



A message from our Principal

Oak was the idea of a group of teachers. Their aim was simple – work together rather than alone to support their colleagues through one of the most challenging periods in education's, and the country's, recent history.

With the support of schools, Local Authorities, school trusts, education organisations and businesses from across the country, the idea has grown beyond anything we expected. Our initial group of 40 remarkable volunteer teachers quickly doubled and have now helped millions of children take part in 20 million lessons. They've played a small but important role in the national effort to keep children learning during lockdown. But sadly, we know this is not job-done.

Come September we hope every pupil can be reunited with their class. There is no substitute for pupils being taught by their teacher. But many uncertainties lie ahead. So Oak is staying open for 2020/21 as a free, optional resource, available to support any school with their contingency planning.

As we develop from our initial emergency response, our work has been shaped by the feedback of teachers, school leaders and parents.

It is they who we want to serve, and so I'm delighted to share some very early findings about how they've used Oak to date, and what we've learnt from them. All so we can keep supporting teachers and children through a challenging year ahead. As we do, we will continue to evaluate our work and its impact, and listen to views of schools and teachers so we better meet their needs.



Matt Hood,

Principal, Oak National Academy



About this report

We recognised from the beginning that it would be important for us to understand how people were using Oak. That is why since our launch we have been working with a research partner, ImpactEd, to help us collect and analyse our data. The aim is to help us understand what we are doing well, and how we might improve.

We know that this report is not a holistic evaluation of Oak. There are some big limitations to the data that we collect that we want to be clear about. First, because users don't log-in to Oak and we take significant privacy protections (including obscuring IP addresses) there are restrictions to what information we have about the people who visit the platform. Second, because the way people are using Oak is likely to change significantly from next academic year, the trends and usage types reported here won't necessarily be the same in the future.

Despite these limitations, we wanted to share some of the insights that we do have – along with how we are intending to use them – from our first term's work. We are hoping that this foundation will make it easier to carry out more research and evaluation in the future.

For now, this report is an attempt to provide some initial answers to the following seven questions:

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A note on terminology

Throughout this report we've referred to 'users' or 'people' accessing Oak and its resources. Given the levels of interactions within the site, such as videos watched and quizzes completed, the vast majority of these users will be pupils. However, we are mindful that teachers and parents will also interact with these features so have used a neutral term.

How was the data collected?

The data that informed this report has been collected and analysed by our research partner, ImpactEd. They have used two datasets:

- First, the analytics data from the website itself.^[i]
- Second, the results of qualitative surveys and interviews with teachers and parents.^[ii]

Since launching Oak, ImpactEd has gathered feedback from 1,369 teachers at two time points. In addition, an independent researcher Claire de la Mothe Karoubi has collected data from 681 parents. In the technical notes to this document, we provide more detail about how this data has been gathered. Details about the organisations and researchers that have supported us are provided below:

About ImpactEd



ImpactEd is an independent, non-profit organisation that supports schools and education organisations to evaluate their impact, learn from it, and prioritise what is working best to improve outcomes for young people. They are working as the research partner for Oak National Academy and have helped to collate the data featured in this report.

You can find out more about ImpactEd's work at www.impactted.org.uk and view emerging insights from their research into the impact of the lockdown on pupil learning and wellbeing at www.impactted.org.uk/covid-19.



About Claire de la Mothe Karoubi

Claire runs CDLMK Innovation. She has an MBA from INSEAD and a background in user experience, marketing, and behavioural science. Having led consulting projects for 25+ global organisations and start-ups, she has particular expertise in qualitative and ethnographic research and design thinking methodology. For more details, visit <https://www.clairedlmk.com>.



1. How many people are using Oak?

When we started Oak, we had no idea how many teachers, parents or pupils would access the resources and lessons that we uploaded. We do not require user logins, both to protect privacy and because we didn't want to introduce barriers to accessing the resources. Despite this, we are able to do some limited tracking of users over time and analyse some trends.

In total, over 4.7m people have visited Oak.

This number is calculated per device, so if more than one person in a household is using Oak, the total number could be significantly higher. On average, 220,000 users access Oak every day.^v We noticed around 50,000 more users than we would usually expect on the day the Duchess of Cambridge gave an assembly!^[iii]

4,700,290
unique users
visiting the site



People who visited Oak have taken part in just under 20m lessons.^[ii]

In total, they have watched 181 million minutes of video. That equates to an astonishing 344 years' worth of content. They have answered over 71 million questions in 12 million quiz responses, getting on average 74% of answers correct. Of course, this data does not tell us how much users were engaged in the lessons, or how much they learned. We will continue to explore ways to find out more about the impact of the resources.



2. Which Oak resources are most popular?

A lot of resources were uploaded to Oak very quickly. As we refine Oak for next term, we thought it was important to understand what people were accessing when they visited Oak.

Most people who visit Oak access resources for younger pupils.

7% of lessons taken part are in Reception; 24% in KS1, 53% in KS2, and 15% in Key Stages 3 and 4. This fits in with our wider findings about teachers who don't use Oak: they have told us that when Oak's curriculum doesn't align with their own, it is harder for them to use it. So as the curriculum offer becomes more specific for older pupils (as they take subject choices, or study for specific exam boards), fewer users access the resources.

Our surveys and interviews also suggest two potential additional reasons for higher levels of primary engagement. Primary schools were more likely to mention lack of technology resources for supporting remote learning than (larger) secondary schools. And parents of primary age children appear to be particularly likely to report that they have found Oak's lessons helpful as part of their timetable for supporting children at home.

Core subjects are most popular, with French, Geography and Spanish also seeing high uptake.

At primary school level, users took part in just under 7 million English lessons and 6 million Maths lessons. In KS3 and KS4, Science was the most popular, accounting for 29% of all secondary school lessons taken. After English and Maths, this was followed by French (8%), Geography (7%), Spanish (6%) and History (5%).

Our most popular single lesson was 'Area and Perimeter' in Year 4 Maths, having been accessed a remarkable 243,000 times. Unsurprisingly, we see that lessons which have been on the site longest get the most views – the majority of those views are in the weeks after publication. This suggests users are using Oak at a pace that suits them – working through the lessons in order in their own time, being sent to specific topics by teachers, or accessing certain lessons they want to learn more about.



We see a higher proportion of correct quiz responses at primary level.

On average, 79% of quiz responses in KS1 and KS2 were correct, versus 67% across KS3 and KS4. We suspect that this might reflect the larger range of subjects offered by Oak at secondary – given curriculum differences, there is likely to be greater variation in what users know already relative to the lesson content on Oak, which shows up in their answers.

Looking at a subject level, in our most popular subjects we see the highest proportion of correct quiz responses in Maths and PSHE, and lowest in Science, German and Geography.

Teachers and parents both told us that well-designed quizzes really helped to engage pupils, but that when they were seen as too challenging this could demotivate pupils. We will be conducting further research on how quiz responses relate to lesson engagement to help create the best possible experience for young people.

Parents and carers say that their children often return to lessons from the same teacher

Parents were particularly likely to reference the value of seeing a teacher on screen and pupils' ability to engage with them. One parent told us that:

“[xxx] was speaking to the screen as if the teachers were in the room with him”

Although there is no substitute for physical interactions in the classroom, parents reported that the video lesson format provided a less impersonal way of engaging with learning than other remote learning activities. One parent mentioned that when her child switched to doing some activities on paper, her first response was:

“I miss Maths with [xxx]!”

This sense of personal connection seems to have been strong with younger pupils.



3. How often do people visit Oak?

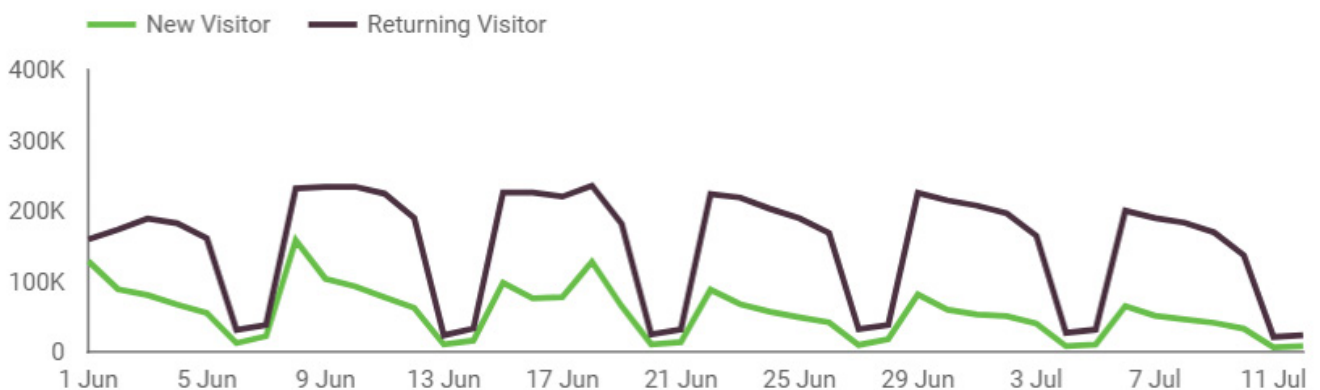
Analysing the total number of visitors to Oak can only tell us so much. We also want to know if people who use the site do so regularly.

Oak usage is now mostly made up of return learners.

Following the first 10 days of Oak, return visitors outnumbered new visitors. Now, roughly 75% of people who use Oak are repeat users. Since the half-term break, they have driven increasing levels of Oak usage.



Oak Users by User Type (Half-term 1: 20th April – 24th May)



Oak Users by User Type (Half-term 1: 20th April – 24th May)



As people have used Oak more regularly, more lessons have been completed.

In the first two weeks of Oak, 49% of users who started a lesson completed it. In the last fortnight before the summer break, 64% of users starting a lesson completed it.^[i] It is difficult to benchmark this rate given the lack of comparable resources, but it is worth noting that completion of online courses is often under 5%, although typically composed of multiple lessons.^[ii]

Encouragingly, the more often a user uses the site, the longer they spend on it and the more likely they are to complete lessons.^[iii] Regular learning tends to drive better results!



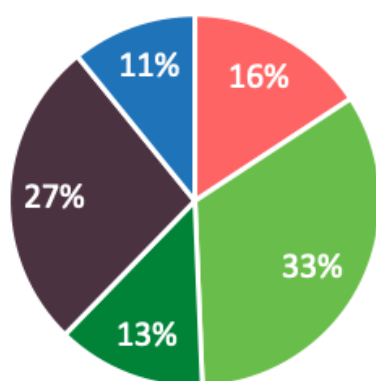
4. Why do people visit Oak?

We set up Oak as a resource to support education during a time when many schools and parents were grappling with the challenges of learning from home. We also wanted it to be flexible and accessible to as wide an audience as possible. Given this, we thought it was important to consider why teachers, parents and pupils were actually using the resources on Oak. These are some insights from our initial research:

Schools and parents both like that it is easy to use Oak.

Ease of use and accessibility were mentioned by 25 out of 29 schools across two waves of interviews. Focus groups pointed to the lack of a login requirement and the simplicity of the platform's design as particularly helpful. Parents mentioned the video format as requiring less of their input than completing worksheets or other home learning activities.

Many teachers use Oak to help them manage increasingly complex workloads.



Teachers who use Oak do so for a variety of reasons. Reduced workload and improving the quality of teaching and learning are reported by teachers as being the two biggest motivations for using Oak. A third of teachers said that their main motivation for using Oak was to help them manage their workload; 27% referenced the main benefit as improving the quality of teaching and learning they could offer.

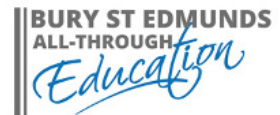
- More effective curriculum implementation
- Increase quality of teaching and learning
- Reduced teacher workload
- Reduced planning complexity
- Other



Lots of teachers who have used Oak this term plan to use it in September as well.

70% of teachers surveyed said that they would use Oak at their school in September. In fact, nearly a third of teachers who don't currently use Oak said that they planned to use it in 2020/21.

Case Study: **Bury St Edmunds All-Through Trust**



The Westley Campus of Bury St Edmunds All Through Trust educates pupils aged 9-13 and began using Oak Academy following experimentation with live lessons and a number of other resources. They wanted to ensure that pupils both in and out of school received a similar curriculum progress, and to ensure that uptake of remote learning was as strong as possible.

Using Google Classroom, they have shared documents with pupils on a daily basis to complete on their learning through Oak, to build a regular rhythm around home learning and ensure that pupils are able to receive feedback from their teachers.

Case Study: **Fielding Primary School**



A primary school and nursery based in Ealing, Fielding Primary have been creating home learning packs providing wraparound materials for Oak lessons. (Available online at: <https://www.fieldingprimary.com/learning-at-home-resources>).

As a very large primary school serving 950 pupils, they had to balance teaching for around 100 key worker children physically in school while providing remote learning opportunities for others.

To do this, they designed a series of packs building on Oak lesson resources which provided further opportunities for application and exploration. Using Oak flexibly in this way has enabled them to provide a more consistent education which has worked both in and out of the classroom.



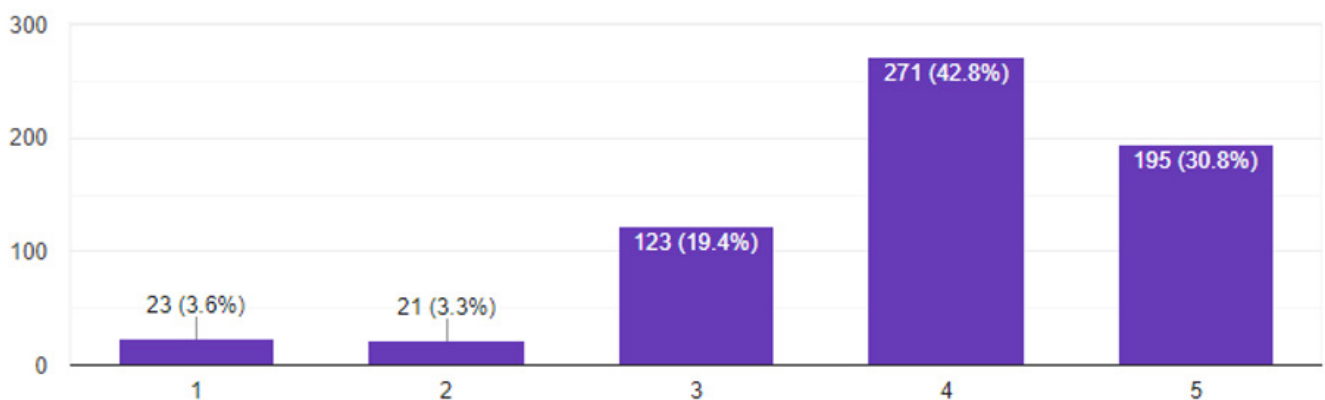
5. What do people think of the resources available on Oak?

Oak produced resources for its first term at speed. While we are hugely grateful to all the teachers who gave up their time to contribute, we also know that the website and the resources were not perfect. We've worked hard to expand our offer, develop the website and improve our quality assurance since launch and the feedback we've received has also shaped our plans for next year.

We have done some initial research into what people think about the resources on Oak. These are some of the headlines:

Teachers who use Oak are very positive about the resources and would recommend them to others.

Of those who responded to the survey, 86% said that they would be likely to recommend using Oak to other teachers. Overall user satisfaction was also high, although with room for improvement.



On a five-point scale, how satisfied have you been with using the Oak resources?

Parents also felt positive on average, with the continuity of teaching playing the largest role in this: 78% of parents we surveyed listed great lessons and teachers as their “favourite” part of the Oak experience.



Teachers would like to know more about how their pupils are using the resources.

When we asked about the issues people had, ability to understand how pupils are using the resources emerged strongly. In particular, teachers were interested in better oversight of how actively pupils were engaging with the resources and understanding what they had learned. This desire for more data has been a trade-off for Oak, as teachers and parents are also very keen on the ease of access that comes without logins or passwords, and with the need for privacy and data protection.



6. What stops people using Oak?

Oak was never designed to replace classroom teaching and we don't expect all teachers to use it. But it is important we know what barriers exist for those who do want to access the resources – over 50% of teachers who are not currently planning to use Oak next year told us that addressing these barriers would make them likely or very likely to do so. This what our initial research shows:

Teachers who don't use Oak say that it doesn't always align with their curriculum.

Over 40% of teachers who don't use Oak said that the lack of alignment with their school's curriculum was the reason they didn't use the platform. Given the variety in how schools design and sequence their curricula, we knew it was unlikely Oak would be able to fit every setting.

In response, we've worked with subject experts, subject associations and teachers to identify and teach the most popular topics taught in school. And we've published our entire plan of lessons for next year, with the majority being made available by September so schools can use the resources more flexibly and re-order them to suit their curriculum.

Both parents and teachers would like to be able to download, edit and print Oak resources.

When asked what one thing they would improve about Oak, the single most common request from parents was that they would like to be able to download and print resources. This was also a priority for both teachers that used Oak and those that didn't. One non-user summarised their feelings about these areas:

“We have already invested a lot of time in creating learning resources so it needs to be much easier for Oak to slot into that. If we could customise the worksheets and slides that would be a massive help and mean we could use Oak flexibly” Key stage 3 lead



WHAT IS THE OAK NATIONAL ACADEMY?

In response, we will be making our resources downloadable and editable wherever copyright allows.

It is hard to make Oak lessons work perfectly across a range of pupils and learning contexts.

Particular in early user research, accessibility for different pupil starting points and specialist needs emerged as a strong barrier. It was sometimes felt that content either wasn't appropriate for the target age range or that the structure of the site made it hard to navigate the curriculum flexibly.

In response, our approach for September has been to allow schools and pupils maximum flexibility to re-order lessons and topics to best match and meet their needs. To support this, teachers now won't reference a year group at the start of lessons, meaning content can be used for any group. We have also expanded our specialist curriculum and prioritised accessibility features across all areas of the site.

Not every pupil has the necessary access to the internet or devices to engage with Oak.

Around 25% of teachers said that their pupils didn't have internet access at home to use Oak. Although we can't address technical challenges on our own, we can help by improving access to Oak's resources even when pupils may not be able to stream lesson videos.

In response, we have prioritised resource downloadability so teachers can print materials that can be used even where home learning does not allow for video streaming.



7. What should Oak do next?

Despite the intention for all pupils to return to school, there's still potential for local lockdowns, continued shielding or classes on rotas. Schools have been asked to create contingency plans. So Oak National Academy will remain open as a free, optional resource for the next academic year. We want to support schools to create, as far as possible, a seamless transition between learning in school and at home.

The feedback we've gathered has shown we could improve our work further, and that we need to change our approach for the different context of next academic year. These views have shaped our plans for next year, so we:

- Worked with a wide range of teachers, sector bodies and subject associations to identify and teach the most popular topics, to match as many school curricula as possible
- Published our plan of lessons we will teach for the year in July 2020, and will make the majority of these nearly 10,000 lessons available by September, to help schools integrate the resources into their planning
- Have given schools more flexibility, allowing them to re-order lessons and topics to best match and meet their needs
- Expanded our curriculum, increasing the number of subjects, including up to Year 11 and increasing the range of Specialist content.
- Will, wherever copyright allows, enable teachers to download, edit and print resources to support lesson planning and help students without access to internet-enabled devices
- Will explore how Oak can better integrate with existing learning management systems.

Through all our work we are committed to continuing to listen and learn from all the teachers and schools we're here to serve. And this will be underpinned by efforts to improve the quality of the data we can analyse, so we can better understand and further improve the impact of Oak.



Technical notes

[i] Gathered via Google Analytics and analysed using Google Data Studio. To protect individual privacy, please note that we are only able to gather user data for those who have accepted all cookies while using Oak. All figures reported here are 'adjusted' i.e. they scale up numbers based on the proportion of those who have not accepted cookies. We do this by comparing data from Oak server logs with that given by Google Analytics. Data reported in this document covers the period from 20th April to 12th July 2020.

[ii] Two surveys conducted with teachers and school leaders. Wave 1 in May was completed by 387 respondents (users of Oak only). Wave 2 in June-July was completed by 982 respondents (both users and non-users. Approximately 1/3 non-users and 2/3 users). One survey conducted in June with parents completed by 681 respondents, all users of Oak. Across both groups, we also held one-to-one interviews and small focus groups comprising of 29 schools and 15 parents.

[iii] Average daily users, excluding half-term week and weekends, is 222,581

[iv] 337,622 users on the 18th June – our second highest peak since Oak launched

[v] From 20th April to 12th July 2020: 19,927,910 lessons accessed; 11,890,256 quiz responses answering 71,858,132 questions; 73.62% correct

[vi] We define a lesson as completed when users have watched 75% or more of a lesson video. We have also looked at alternative metrics, including the number of users clicking to the very last confirmation page of a lesson. However, particularly at primary, we notice significant drop-off at the end of a video as users click onto another lesson directly. We use the percentage of video completion as a proxy for this reason. 75% is used because of limitations with the analytics Vimeo is able to provide. Please note that sessions are classed as inactive after a certain period of time – so if a pupil walked away from their computer for lunch and then came back to finish the lesson, the first session would count as an incomplete lesson.

[vii] See: <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/363/6423/130>

[viii] If a user visits Oak ten times, their average session length is roughly double that of a user who visits only once. Returning users also engage for much longer than new users on average.



Thank you.

