

Working Together to Provide Sustainable Approaches to Education Staff to Support Children's Speech, Language & Communication (SLC) Needs

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The SLT Attainment Team was allocated 35 Keys to Success primary schools in North Lanarkshire in September 2016, to work collaboratively with parents and education staff to support children's SLC needs who live in the highest areas of deprivation as part of the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge. This was then cascaded to offer sustainable approaches to all (120) schools in North Lanarkshire. The team modelled evidence-based interventions to staff to ensure sustainability and reduce the poverty related attainment gap. Staff were equipped with ways to identify, monitor, track and support children's progress.

Aim

- 1) To improve the speech, language and communication skills (SLC) for children within deciles 1-3 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) by June 2019
- 2) To support education staff to feel more confident at identifying & delivering appropriate interventions to develop SLC skills that support literacy development by June 2019.
- 3) To engage families within SIMD 1-3 to raise awareness of SLC norms & provide strategies to support children's SLC skills by June 2019.

Method

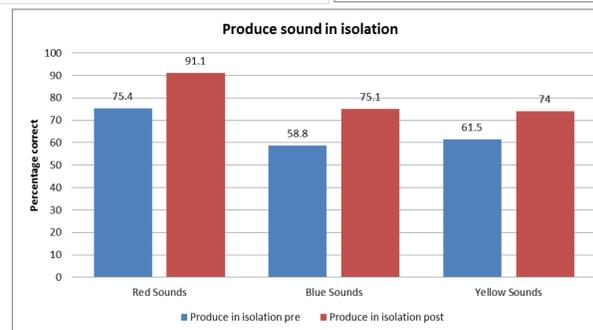
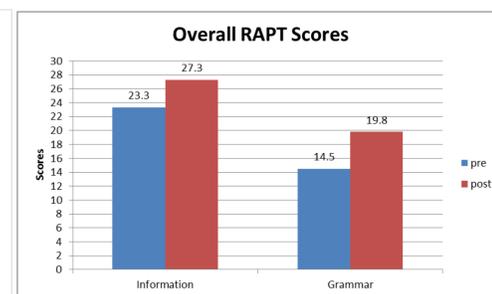
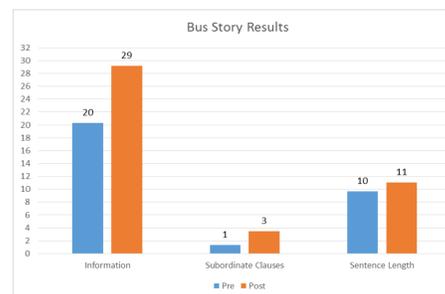
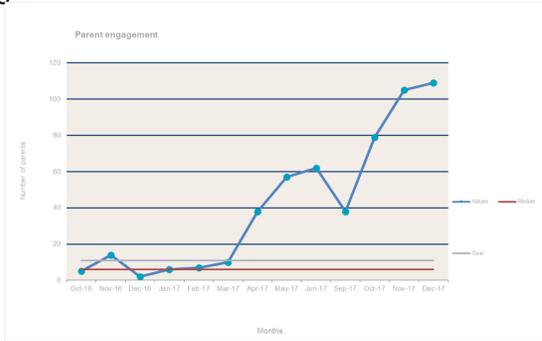
Improvement tools such as PDSA cycles, run charts, a driver diagram & the measures below were used to identify change:

- Staff questionnaires to identify concerns/ needs & training feedback questionnaires
- Meetings with senior management team & parents
- Renfrew Action Picture Test (RAPT) & The Renfrew Bus Story Test
- BLANK assessment questions & Sunnybank assessment checklist
- LanguageLand rating scale
- Verbal feedback from parents, children and education staff
- Number of staff trained, children receiving interventions & parents attending

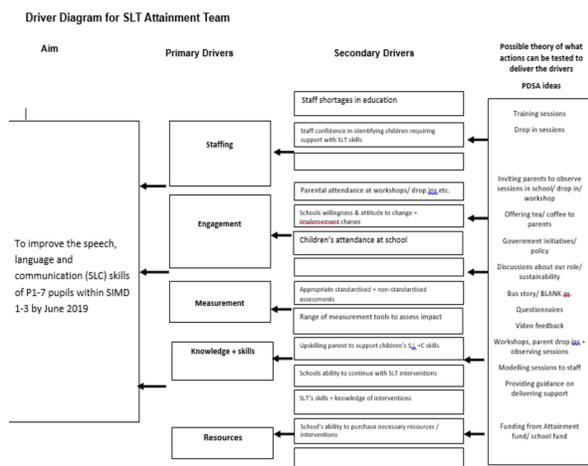
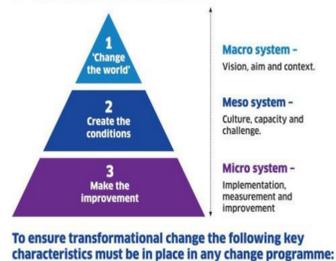
Education staff were encouraged to use assessment tools to ensure sustainability.

Results

The run chart below, shows parental engagement increased when parents were invited to see their child involved in an activity rather through workshops or parent evenings.



The 3-Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's Public Services



Process Change

The SLT Attainment Team modelled 4 interventions (LanguageLand, Lego Therapy, Sunnybank & Colourful Semantics) to education staff in schools in North Lanarkshire. Workshops on the 4 interventions were also delivered to staff. Children's SLC skills were assessed using formal/ informal assessments before starting interventions & on completion of sessions to identify their impact.

Achievements

Formal / informal assessments along with feedback from education staff, parents, SLTs & children indicated improvements in children's SLC skills, that children & staff enjoyed the interventions and felt they were beneficial in supporting children's SLC skills. Parents & staff felt more confident in supporting children following SLT input.

Key Learning Points

- By listening to feedback from key stakeholders, e.g. education staff, CLD workers, parents & children, we have been able to train staff in interventions which have the greatest impact on children's SLC skills.
- Education staff & CLD workers feel more confident in identifying & supporting children with SLC needs as a result of the SLT team delivering training & modelling interventions.
- This model of working has provided sustainable approaches for other professionals to support children's SLC skills.
- Parents are more likely to engage with services when they observe their child in an activity rather than workshops or drop in clinics.
- By using improvement tools such as PDSA cycles & run charts, it has allowed us to identify patterns, reflect and adapt to best meet the needs of children, their parents and other professionals.

Conclusions

- All 3 aims have been achieved.
- Education staff are continuing to use interventions with other children in the school & there is evidence of this through wall displays in schools and feedback from staff.
- 3732 children have received interventions, 444 staff were trained.
- 84% of schools are continuing to run at least one intervention

Quotes from education staff, parents & children

- "Post assessment results showed a positive impact on all children who took part in interventions."
- "My son struggles socially & since he has been in the group, he has talked about playing with these children in the playground. It has been really nice."
- "It was brilliant! We used our imagination & sang lots of songs."

Scale / Spread

We initially started with 35 Keys to Success schools before up-scaling & spreading our work to 120 schools. From September 2019- June 2020, The SLT Attainment Team will be supporting education staff so that 90% of schools are regularly using at least one of the interventions in their school.