Raising Attainment in Children's communication skills

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Following Joseph Rowntree Foundation report which highlighted that children from low- income family's households were significantly performing worse at school compared to children from better-off homes and recognised there was an attainment gap which needed to be addressed. In response to this a global aim was developed which states "Through increased opportunities for children at risk of low achievement in literacy due to the poverty related attainment gap, 75 % of children will progress to the next stage of development using "UP Up and Away." From this, My personal aim was developed and focussed on the improvement plan for 3-5 yr. old children . For the project, my personal aim was:

Raise attainment to 71% in communication skills for children of quintile 1, in order to progress to the next stage using "Up Up and Away" by June 2019

Method

After completing my baselines assessments and following discussions with management, practitioners and EYO, 8 children were identified who would benefit from further communication development.

To achieve the goal and raise their attainment using Up Up and away toolkit, 3 change ideas were chosen to help assess the progress of each child's communication skills. The activities included listening and reciting 2 nursery rhymes and participating in an interactive story.

From these activities, I focused on areas such as key word recalling/ pronunciation, rhythm recognition, developing vocabulary and recitation/ recall of the rhyme. PDSA method was used as it helped breaking down the task into the steps and then evaluating the outcome, improving on it and testing again.
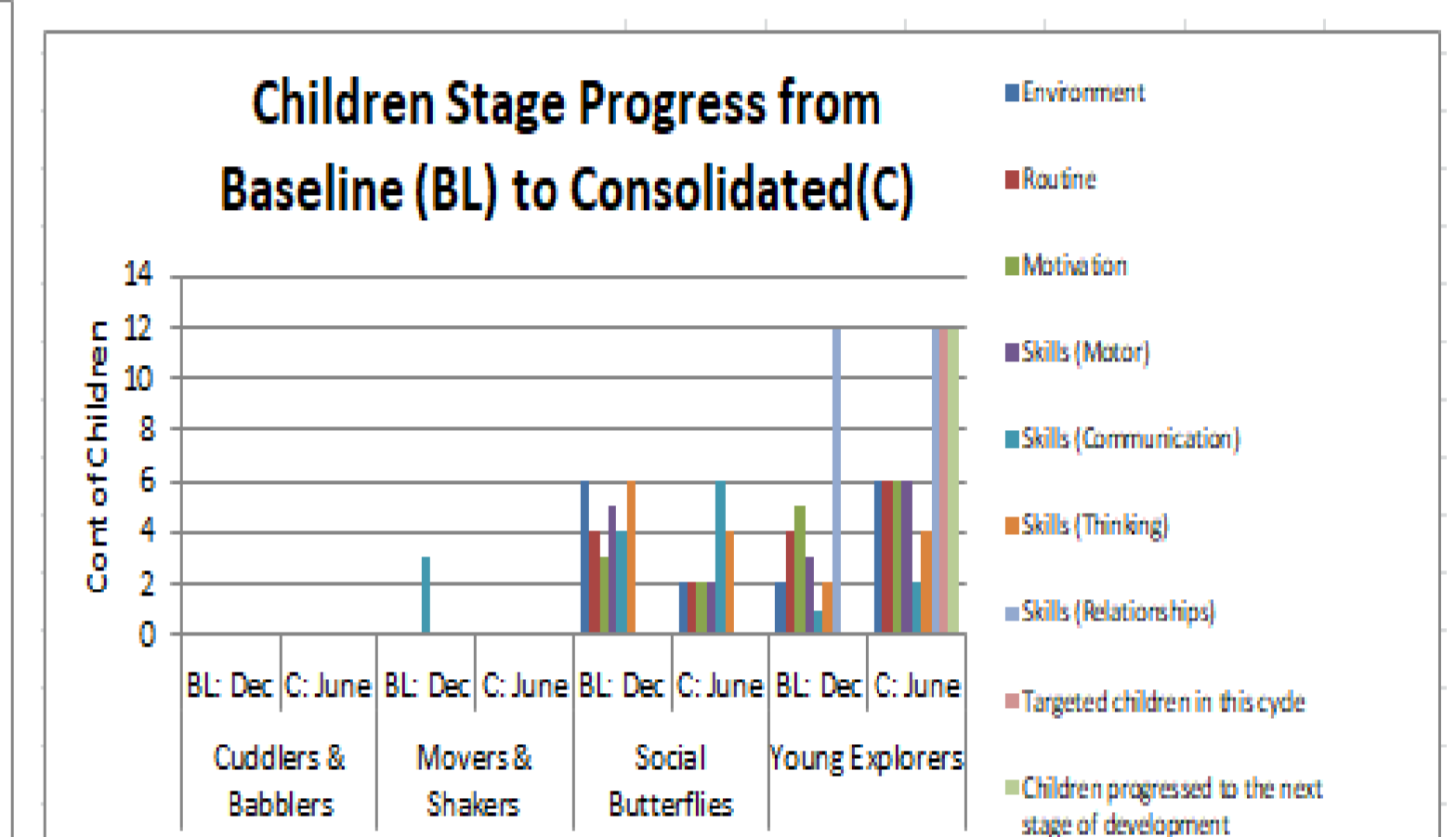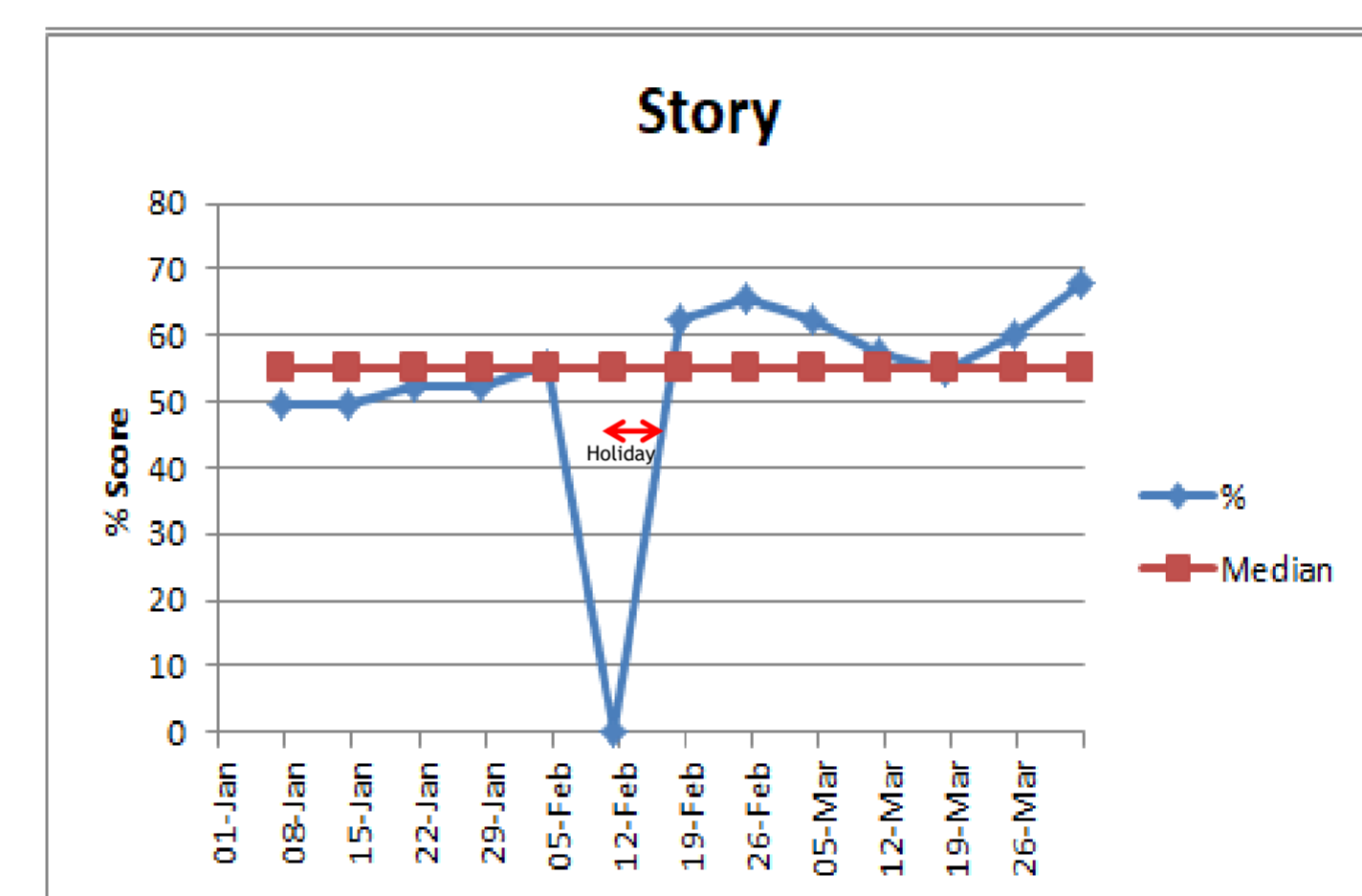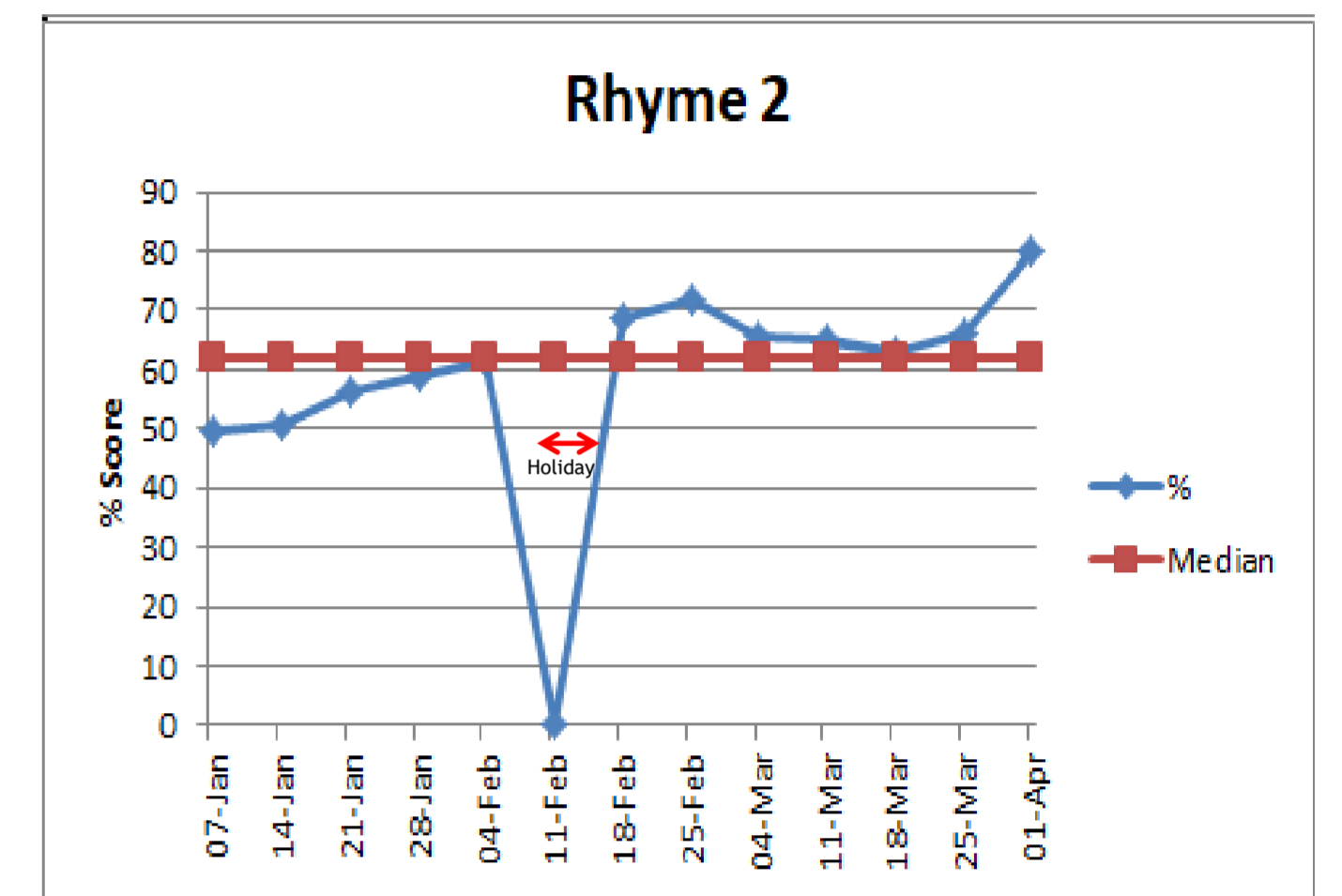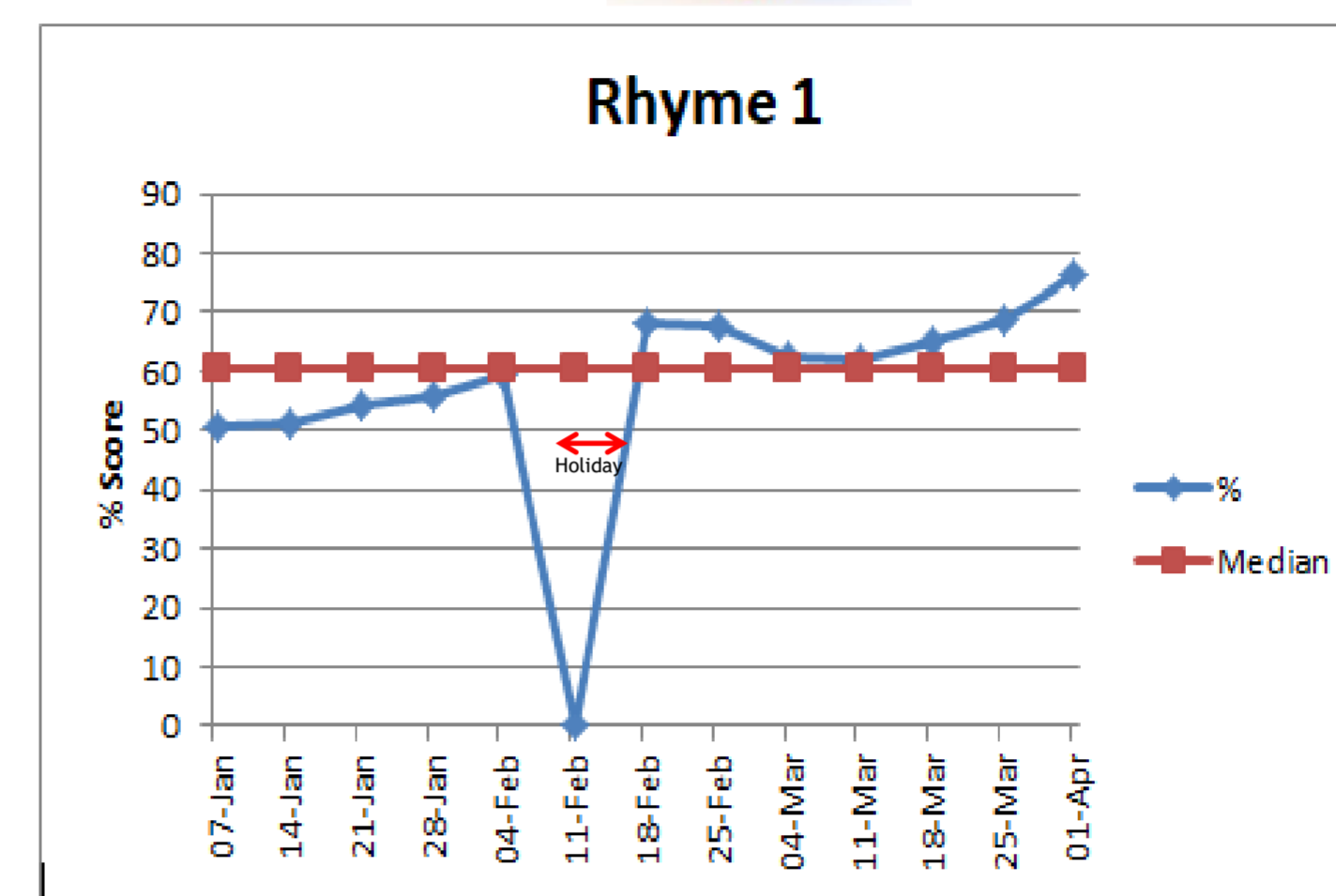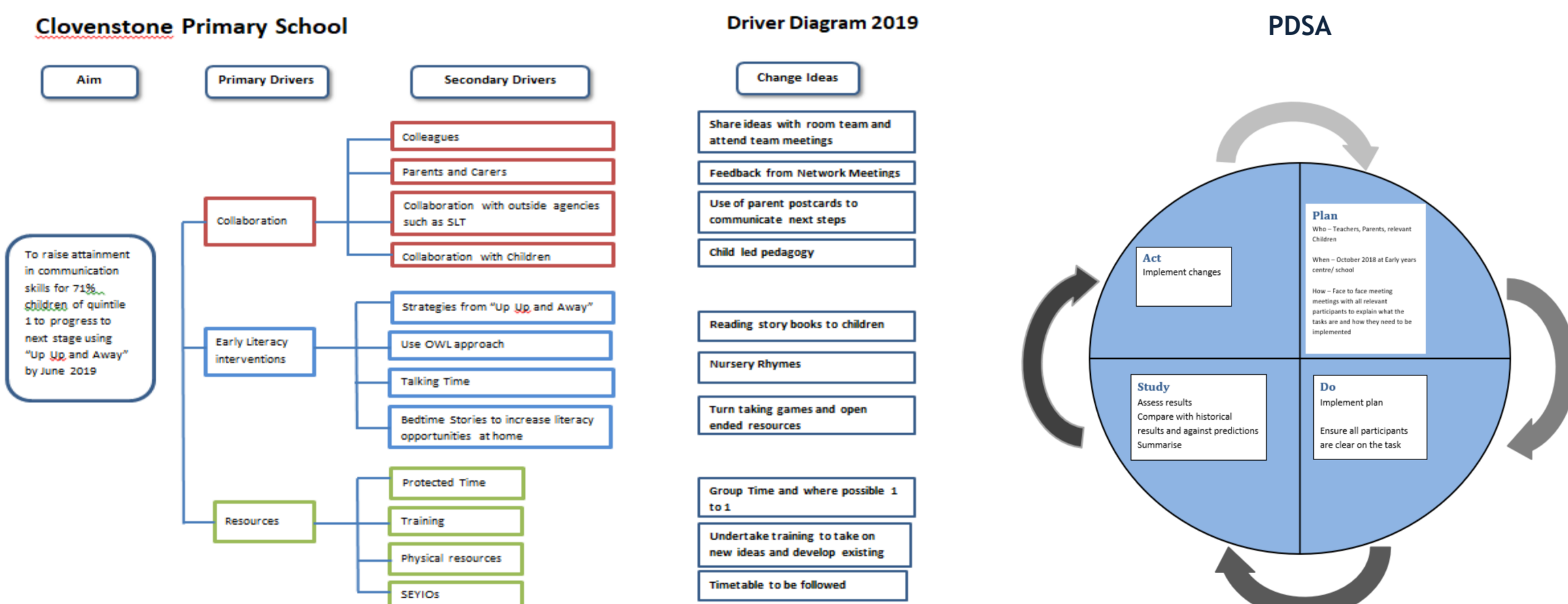
Process Change

I created a driver diagram to help translate my high level improvement aim into a logical set of underpinning goals and changes.

Results

Measurements

- Process- Attendance to the sessions
- Process - Listen attentively
- Process - Talk with Confidence
- Outcome - Key Word recall/ pronunciation
- Balancing Measures – room availability

- Process- Recite / Recall rhyme
- Process - Rhythm Recognition
- Outcome - Recall learning
- Outcome - Develop vocabulary

Achievements

- A more focussed approach to assist with my key children who need help.
- A better collaboration with my colleagues to ensure everyone is aware of the current status of each child.
- Documenting the progress made it easier to track how the children were progressing.
- Training assisted in sharing knowledge with team members.
- Building relationships across multiple agencies helped deliver a more bespoke service to each child.

Key Learning Points

- Key communication skills such as vocabulary not familiar to some of the children caused delays in progressing to the next stage.
- Put language more in the environment as well as focused.
- Absence during the initial part of the project did have an impact on the rate of progress.
- Develop an action plan to encourage parents to become more active in continuing to carry on the learning when the children are not in school.

Conclusions

- The aim of the project was met and exceeded for this project as all the children managed to raise their level within Up Up Away toolkit
- Participation was key and even though the children enjoyed the activities and were heavily involved in the project, participation was slow at the beginning.
- Professional dialogues helped apply pedagogy to improve learning. "Farah is always keen to share her learning" (SEYO comment)
- Practitioners could gauge a clear improvement in communication skills and were able to focus on children who were having difficulties in specific skill development.

Scale / Spread

- Continue to develop children's communication skills by continuing to use rhymes familiar to them
- Look at potentially introducing other change ideas such as board games to further develop existing skill sets as well as introducing new skills.
- Continue to further develop alternative approaches to keep the sessions interesting and challenging for the children.