

Rationale

Due to Covid-19 schools and nurseries in Scotland were closed, with the exception of critical provision for children of key workers and vulnerable families. The transition from primary to secondary school is a key milestone and one of the most difficult transitions faced within education. Quality Improvement methodology provided the opportunity to systematically plan and test out change ideas to support our P7 children emotionally and academically during these unprecedented times and gain learning into 'what works' in terms of pupil engagement and transition continuity.

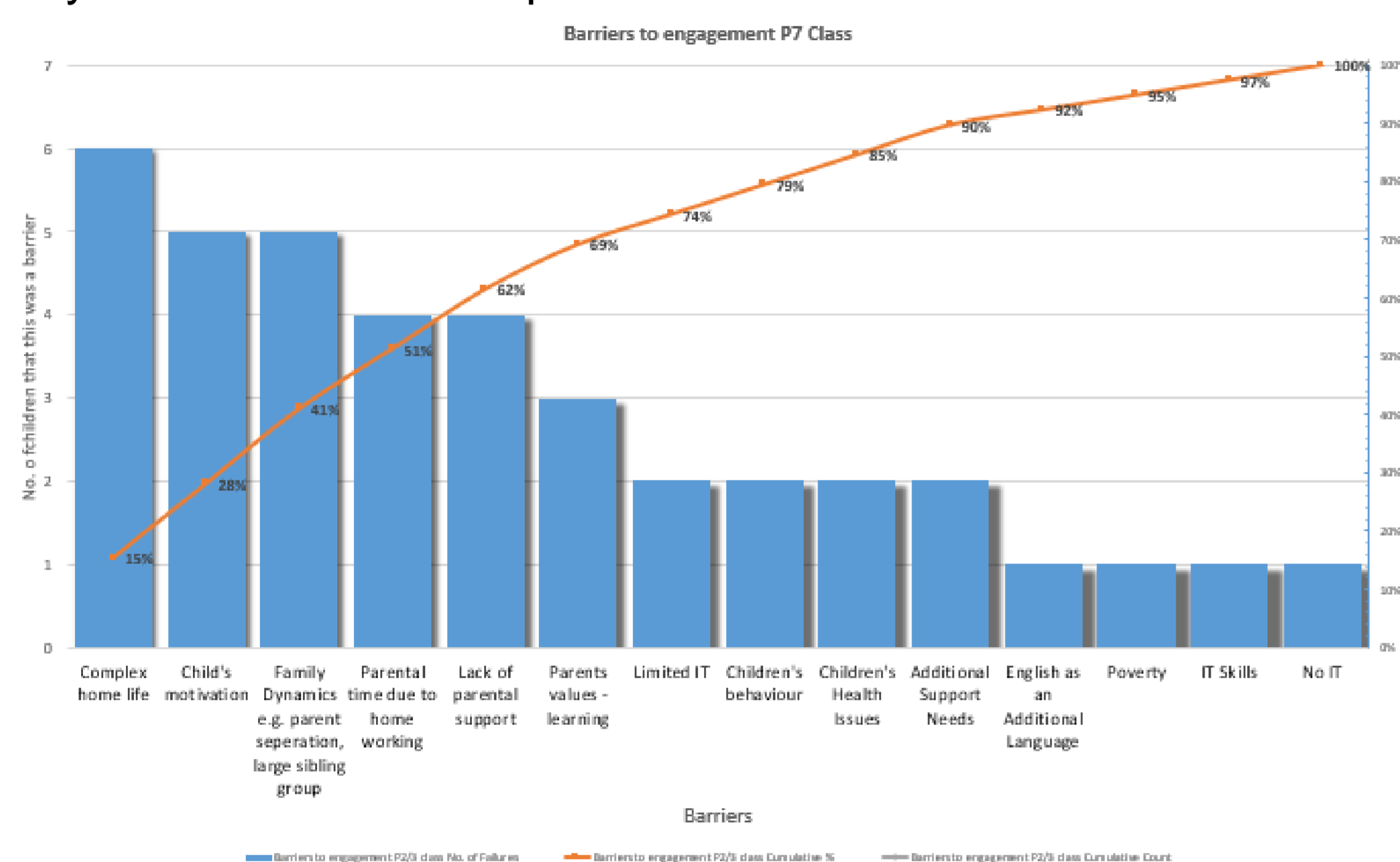
By 30th May 60% of P7 will be engaging* in academic learning (Baseline: 12.5%).

Operational Definition:

*engaging: piece of work submitted, child indicates 'hand in' function and you know through contact with the child/parent that they have engaged in learning.

Method

- Established an Improvement Team.
- Received Quality Improvement coaching support through weekly virtual calls.
- Used Quality Improvement tools to gain a better understanding of children's home circumstances and barriers to learners.
- A Pareto chart enabled us to identify barriers. Complex home life, children's motivation and family dynamics (children moving between parental homes and/or large sibling groups) posed significant challenges.
- Many children faced multiple barriers.

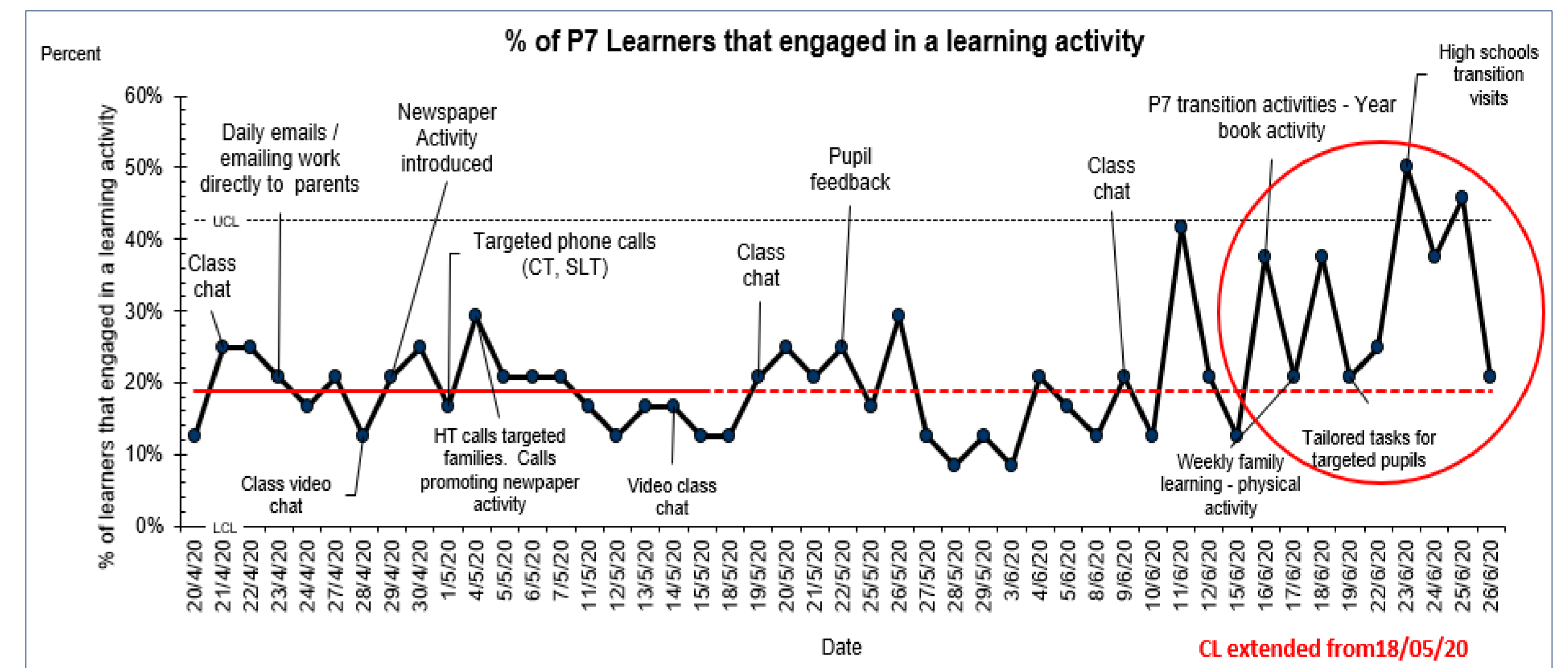


- The Model for Improvement provided a route map to establish improvement aims, agree our operational definition of 'engagement', measures and change ideas to test.

Process Change

- Daily morning emails (check in on emotional wellbeing coupled with riddle/puzzle).
- Check in phone calls from Class Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.
- Direct email contact with targeted parents, emailing individualised work.
- Video chats.
- Garden visits dropping off paper packs, resources and opening up opportunity for face to face conversations.
- Child-led learning tasks to motivate and engage children in learning i.e. school newspaper
- Transition activities e.g. year book, high school visits
- Family learning activities coordinated across school for all stages.
- Whole school promotion of home learning.

Results



Conclusions

- Engaging P7 Learners proved challenging.
- Transition activities (i.e. year book, high school visits) resulted in an increase in pupil's engagement in learning.

Key Learning Points

- A pivotal step was to agree an operational definition for 'pupil engagement' in order to be clear in terms of our improvement aim and measurement plan.
- P7 engagement was lower than other stages.
- Despite exhausting wide-ranging change ideas (daily check-in via Microsoft Teams, emails, phone calls, Virtual class calls) pupil engagement remained low.
- Many children faced multiple complex barriers making home learning challenging.
- The newspaper activity encouraged children to collectively pull together to produce a school newspaper. This activity was child-led and activated children's motivation and pupil agency to engage in learning.

Engaging P7 pupils in online learning was a big challenge. It was important to use technology creatively during this time to encourage participation. The newspaper task was real-life and the children enjoyed the genuine praise and recognition that they received from the school and wider community. This hooked them in to learning in this way.

Achievements

- We hold improvement data demonstrating pupil engagement at an individual level daily.
- There was an increase in engaged (demonstrated by a shift in data) prior to the end of term 4.
- 91% of P7 learners attended high schools transition visits preparing them for this milestone and smooth transition to secondary education.

