

**Marj's class are in
their first school year.
On average, they are reading
14 months ahead of their age.**



**And it cost Marj less than £20
to get started...**

A Jolly Phonics Case Study

No wonder the parents are happy!

Let Birstall County J&I School* tell you more, in their own words...

* in West Yorkshire, England



From 'No Phonics' to *Jolly Phonics*

by Marj Newbury, Reception teacher (average age of class, mid-year: 5 years)



I HAVE now been teaching nearly 25 years. I can honestly say that I have never enjoyed my job as much as I do now. The reason for this is that I teach phonics using Jolly Phonics.

I have taught both Nursery and Reception classes in a variety of schools. When I joined the staff of my present school in 1985, there was actually a 'No Phonics' policy! Then the English National Curriculum was republished in 1994, and the word 'phonics' suddenly appeared. This produced a certain amount of panic in our school. There had been a change of headteacher, but not actually a change of policy. Our new head turned to me and asked me to create a 'Phonics Policy' and a scheme of work. I was extremely worried and at a complete loss as to where to

start. As you can see, my phonics background was not really a good starting point!

It was during the autumn half-term that my teaching life was suddenly about to change. I was in W. H. Smiths (the UK's biggest bookselling chain), browsing while my own children chose some holiday reading, when I chanced upon The Phonics Handbook. Its title caught my eye. I flicked through it, finding large pictures which linked ideas to letter-sounds. Then I noticed the smaller, in-set pictures showing children doing various actions, and realised that each sound was linked to one such action. I actually found

myself trying out some of the actions and laughing aloud as I linked them to the sounds. I particularly liked the double sounds, such as making the ears of a donkey move as I sounded out 'ee' 'or'. There were other sounds that I had actually never thought about: a sailor boy saying 'ie ie'; pricking your finger on a needle and making the sound 'ou'. This was wonderful. I went through nearly the whole book (I must have looked rather silly!). It was almost addictive, as it was such a clever but simple idea, and I just knew that the children in my class would love it.

So I was at last beginning

to address the question of our non-existent phonics programme – and, as I realised on looking at the price, for under £20. I bought The Phonics Handbook and showed it to my Head.

He was very sceptical at first. Probably he thought this was nothing special – just yet another teacher-based handbook – and in the cold light of day I was afraid he might be right. In any case, I knew full well that he was definitely not going to spoil his perfectly-balanced budget by reimbursing me! The only way I would get my money back, was if The Phonics Handbook worked. And the only way to see if that would happen was to get started.

I found the book very easy to read and to understand. It was devised and written by a teacher, and the ethos of the teaching was whole-class input, with six sounds being introduced each week. I did feel a little apprehensive at this point, and decided to teach four sounds a week, which I felt would be more appropriate for the children in our school. I devised this plan of action: each week I would teach two sounds on Monday, and

"The parents love Jolly Phonics – they support me 100%"

reinforce them on Tuesday; then I would teach two more sounds on Wednesday, and reinforce all four on Thursday. This would still leave time on Friday to catch any child needing extra help.

The resources needed were minimal. I photocopied and coloured in the first few Sound Sheets from the

Handbook, which showed the story ideas and actions for each sound. I laminated them to make them last. Then I made and covered flash cards for the first few letter sounds. I did the others as I went along, so I never had to spend too long on preparation at any one time. All these resources were in The Phonics Handbook and ready to photocopy. On my own initiative, I bought a cheap, coloured basket to put the cards in, and then, following the suggestion in the Handbook, I made a Sound Book for each child, by cutting taller exercise books in half. These little books were to be sent home, so the parents could help the children by practising flashing the letter shapes and whispering the sounds.

"The children loved learning so quickly and with such effect"

I was all set. I followed the Handbook very carefully and told my stories, acting out the actions and flashing the letter shapes. To my amazement, the children remembered all the sounds and the actions. As planned, they mastered four in the first week,

then eight by the end of the second week and twelve by the end of the third! I was so pleased – and the children absolutely loved it. They kept going to the ‘Magic Basket’ and testing each other, and they asked me if we could play the Magic Basket game again and again. Their excitement, and of course their progress, made me feel that I definitely deserved to get back my £20!

As I have said, my Head was commonly known to run a tight ship, and I knew that we would have to impress him if money was ever to change hands. I decided to invite him to come and observe the children, and see what he thought. He watched as the children all came in from break. When they saw the Magic Basket on my knee, they all came and squeezed in around me on the carpet. I was able to shake the basket and catch their attention quickly. I

told them that I wanted to show our Head just how clever we really were, and asked them to watch carefully and whisper the sounds that I was about to show them. All was quiet – and then the magic worked! The children were wonderful. They remembered every single sound.

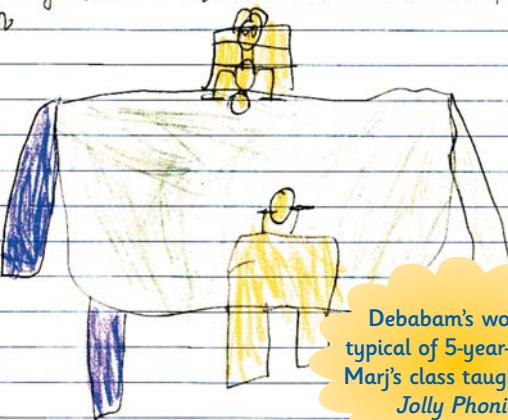
My Headteacher was over the moon. The children were all very proud and the atmosphere in the classroom was

one of achievement, motivation and, above all, lots of child-centred fun. The Head got up from his little chair and disappeared. He came back immediately with a twenty pound note. What more can I say for Jolly Phonics? This was the highest accolade!

It has now been five years since I began using Jolly Phonics and my enthusiasm has remained as high as it was in those first few weeks. I love

“Every child should be given this powerful literacy foundation”

I like to eat my chicken and I like to eat rice and I like to eat a fish and I like to eat a tomato in my house and I like to watch my mum



Debabam's work is typical of 5-year-olds in Marj's class taught with Jolly Phonics

teaching children with this programme, and I know that all the children have loved learning their literacy skills so quickly and with such effect. Each year, as I gain in experience, I find ways to make my teaching of the system even better. The parents love the programme, and support me 100%. Because they are learning so fast, the children know that they are very clever – for them, all written words are just an adventure.

I realised quite a while ago, now, that the Jolly Phonics method is an incredibly powerful way to teach. It gives young children a truly advanced insight into the world of the written word. This understanding is of such depth and quality that it amazes me every day.

Jolly Phonics is a child-centred, effective teaching programme that is simple to deliver, great fun to incorporate into each day’s literacy sessions. It should be the right of every child to be given this powerful foundation to their literacy education.

“I am amazed at how much Dominic has learnt!” Dominic loved his ‘Sound Book’, and liked doing the actions. He was very proud when he linked the sounds to make words, and is now a good reader, thanks to the scheme. When doing his writing, he always sounds out the word first too, using his Jolly Phonics sounds.

Not only was the programme used to teach Dominic to read and write, it was also used in his speech therapy sessions. Jolly Phonics helped him learn to speak clearly, when he was suffering from hearing problems.



My son and Jolly Phonics

by Mrs J.S. Irving, mother of Dominic, aged 5

Results of Standardised Reading Test

Marj's Reception class

Pupil:	Boy/Girl:	Actual Age:	Reading Age:	Reading Gain:
DC	g	5:10	7:0	+1:2
TB	g	5:9	6:10	+1:1
CU	b	5:9	6:11	+1:2
RE	b	5:8	6:5	+0:9
ND	b	5:8	6:5	+0:9
HI	b	5:8	6:11	+1:3
JE	b	5:8	7:2	+1:6
YC	g	5:8	7:1	+1:5
IK	b	5:7	6:11	+1:4
EM	b	5:6	5:11	+0:5
SM	g	5:6	7:1	+1:7
MA	g	5:6	7:1	+1:7
CN	b	5:6	7:2	+1:8
GB	b	5:5	6:8	+1:3
CE	b	5:4	6:5	+1:1
LK	g	5:4	6:3	+0:11
MS	g	5:3	6:0	+0:9
LK	b	5:3	7:4	+2:1
BD	g	5:2	6:10	+1:8
CK	b	5:1	6:8	+1:7
CE	b	5:3	7:7	+2:4
IF	g	5:5	6:6	+1:1
IU	b	4:10	6:8	+1:10
TM	b	4:10	NS	-0:2
BB	b	5:10	6:2	+0:4
MP	b	5:6	6:8	+1:2
UO	g	5:8	6:6	+1:10
RM	g	4:11	5:6	+0:7
Average (Girls):		5:5	6:7	+1:2
Average (Boys):		5:5	6:7	+1:2
Average (Class):		5:5	6:7	+1:2
% above Actual Age: 96.4%				

Reading Test: Hertfordshire Reading Test
NS stands for ‘no score’, considered as 4:8.

All ages and gains shown in years and months.

All the children but one were reading well ahead of their age!



My son's progress in reading, writing and speech

by Mrs L. Budby, mother of Matthew, aged 5

I THINK Jolly Phonics is a wonderful way to learn to read and write. My son Matthew has come on such a long way with this programme, not only

"Jolly Phonics is a wonderful way to learn to read and write - I'd recommend it to anyone!"

with reading and writing but also with his speech. As a child-minder, I have looked after children from various schools. Some of these children

haven't had the chance to use Jolly Phonics, and even at eight years and over, I see them struggling to read words that Matthew already finds easy. I would recommend this programme to anyone. Thank you!

Reaching the educationally needy

by June Hepworth, Year 3 teacher (average age of class, mid-year: 8 years)

FOR THE first ten years of my teaching career, I often struggled with educationally needy children, who were un-able to read or write independently. Twenty percent

"Even less able children are motivated - they write independently and read with confidence"

of the children, from Year 1 to Year 6, always fell into this category. Motivating these children, and teaching them the skills for reading and writing, presented major problems both for them and for me.

Now, five years on and with Jolly Phonics under our belts, these major problems are no longer evident. Even the less able children are well-motivated, can produce written work independently, and can decode and read confidently. I no longer need to ask myself 'How do I approach these children?' Now I know the answer!



Giving our children the best possible foundation

by Diane Pyatt, headteacher

I MUST admit, when I was first appointed to the post of headteacher at this school, I was really surprised to see how advanced the Reception children were, in their literacy skills. This was particularly interesting for me as I had just moved from teaching a Reception class at my last school. I had no previous experience of Jolly

"I had never seen results like these!"

Phonics - I had used another phonics method, and had never had such advanced results as these. Seeing the Jolly Phonics teaching, I was very impressed, both by the speed with which the children learned all their sounds, and by how quickly they learned to use the sounds for reading and writing.

However, these results were not my only source of delight. It was, and still is, a great pleasure to see the children's enthusiasm for learning with Jolly Phonics. This begins right at the start of the

programme and actually gains momentum as the children progress. As a result, our school now has young children who

are happy and confident readers and writers.

All programmes are to some extent reliant on the teachers who deliver them. With Jolly Phonics, because the progress can be

"The teaching benefits all areas of the curriculum"

seen right from the start, the teachers get as inspired as the children. Parents get caught up in this enthusiasm too, and our parental support has never

been so good. I feel that all this is due to the 'rollercoaster' effect that the Jolly Phonics programme promotes. There is definitely a momentum that gathers as the children begin to progress so fast.

As headteacher of our school, I believe that all of our children are being given the best possible foundation. This foundation not only benefits their literacy work, but extends to all areas of the curriculum in an exciting, effective and rewarding way. I just wish I had known about Jolly Phonics when I was still teaching my class of little ones!

Inset Training and Presentations

Marj Newbury is a Jolly Phonics accredited teacher for the West Yorkshire area. If you need extra help implementing Jolly Phonics, you can contact us for details of our network of accredited teachers, including Marj. There are also accredited teachers in the Berkshire, Essex and London areas. You might even want to become an accredited teacher yourself! Fees and expenses for training and presentations are by arrangement with each individual accredited teacher.