

Jolly Phonics

How this school
increased the reading
age of its students
by
up to 3 years.



Hillcrest Primary School: Success for all students

A Case Study

The need for an evidence based results driven program



By Liz Ford
Associate Principal



Hillcrest Primary School was founded in 1950 and is situated on the crest of a hill overlooking the city of Perth in Western Australia. Our learning community has three hundred and eighty students with enrolments expected to grow in the coming years. Experienced, caring and dedicated staff work closely with parents, creating a learning environment that encourages students to realise their full educational, social, physical and creative potential.

As a classroom practitioner, I felt the need to find a phonics program that was results driven and based on evidence. My exposure to Jolly Phonics, and subsequent use in the classroom convinced me of the merit of the program and all the associated benefits. I began implementing it in my Year One class and saw pleasing results. Up until that point, the teachers had been using a variety of methods to teach the children to read and write, none of which were working for them. I heard about the success that Westminster School, featured on *Today Tonight*, was having with Jolly Phonics and I thought that this was something that I could see working for us.

Developing whole school teaching consistency with a core program



In 2012, I became the Literacy Leader at my school. Through discussions with my Principal, Dan Bralich, we established there were no common programs that staff were using, and there was minimal opportunity for transition between classes and year levels. As a passionate educator who had worked collaboratively for many years and recognised the benefits, I felt the need to have consistency between classes and organised planning days for the staff to come to a common understanding. One of the discussions we had was about a common phonics program, and many staff identified Jolly Learning

programs as a preferred method.

We spent 2013 sending interested staff to the International Centre for Excellence to upskill teachers on the program delivery. By the end of the year, we had other staff asking to join in. Early in 2014, once I was appointed as Associate Principal, I invited Victoria Carlton to come to the school and present a basic background to the Jolly Learning programs. As Jolly Phonics was already being implemented, the natural progression to Jolly Grammar enabled for the consistency of common language and expectations

Since then, our relationship with ICE and Jolly Learning has continued to grow. Teachers work collaboratively with Victoria to implement a program throughout the school modelling Best Practice and effective transitioning between classes. Victoria and I meet regularly to discuss progress and future direction. We run parent

workshops to ensure parent involvement and home assistance. All teachers use Jolly Grammar in the primary school as part of our expectations.

This year, we decided to do some baseline testing to see the impact the program was having on the students in our care. In addition to this, I was fortunate to attend the Jolly Learning conference in London and present to the trainers there about the history of our partnership and our outstanding results. Importantly, every class was provided with all the necessary Jolly Phonics resources from the start and if a teacher felt that they needed to do a training session again, the school paid for it. Adopting the Jolly Phonics program throughout the school was a big commitment, but that meant that the staff knew that I was not going to change my mind. The school was committed to one program, Jolly Phonics, and it was here to stay.

Spectacular results

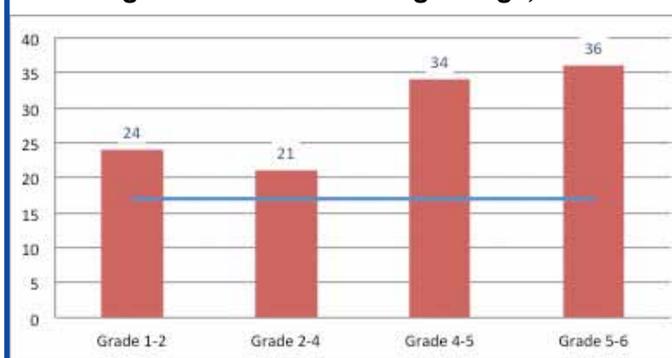
We selected the Waddington test as a baseline as it gave results with an approximate reading age. Using a reading age, we were able to test student progress. When conducting the analysis, we used a 20% representation of stable students in each year group. We were very excited to discover the results attained by the students and the progress they had made.

Over a period of 17 months, the reading age of the students tested increased from a minimum of 21 months, up to 34 months in the older grades.

Australia uses the NAPLAN (National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy) testing for Years 3 and 5. It provides the measure for governments, education authorities and schools to determine whether students are meeting important educational outcomes.

Areas of focus include Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. Prior to our whole school Literacy focus, our results in Year 3 and 5 were varied, with many students falling below the expected level in both spelling and grammar. In 2016, all students were at or above the expected level.

Average difference between reading age on Waddington test and chronological age, in months



We have a common assessment task throughout the school that the teachers administer for Spelling before starting a new grammar book, as well as on completion. The test uses an example of a word from each spelling list and is designed to test student knowledge on areas of focus. We are waiting on results to find out the effectiveness of this tool for classroom teachers, based on comparative data.

“ Hillcrest Primary School is a shining example of how effective teachers, community relationships and a results driven, outcomes based program can all come together to produces results that are indicative of the time, effort and commitment of all involved.”

Nurturing teachers and parents



By Victoria Carlton
Director of International
Centre for Excellence and
Jolly Phonics Trainer



I have been successfully using Jolly Phonics for many years and gradually began using Jolly Grammar as each stage was released. I initially used it with a Grade One class in a large Catholic school and then with children experiencing difficulties with literacy (mixed grades). The children I worked with made excellent progress and I knew the system worked! Jolly Phonics has a great deal of research to back it up but Jolly Grammar has had very little research done.

As a large part of my work now involves training teachers in the Jolly Programs I needed to trial the programs in a school and preferably a large school with a very mixed clientele. Fortunately, after many years of searching, I found such a school (Hillcrest) and we have been successfully working together for a few years now.

My role has been to train Hillcrest teachers and nurture the process as well as facilitating sharing sessions where we exchange ideas, successes and concerns. I also regularly visit the school to model strategies and ensure that the system is working for all children—even those with learning difficulties.

Together with the Hillcrest Associate Principal, Liz Ford, we have now gathered data to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Jolly Grammar with Hillcrest students. I expected positive results but frankly was amazed at the high levels attained by the pupils. So far we have managed to guide and manage the project without any budget other than the Jolly Resources.

I would definitely encourage other schools to implement their own school-based research projects as it has been a positive experience and has helped to convince the staff and parents that this system really offers the best for all enrolled students!

The teacher's story



By Rita Pinnock, Year 1



As a Year One teacher with more than thirty years of experience I have used many different approaches to learning phonics and grammar in the classroom and have found Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar to be a very effective program in teaching children to read and write. Jolly Phonics was introduced to Hillcrest Primary School six years ago beginning with the early years and then extended to the middle/upper years. The same occurred with Jolly Grammar and spelling and the school now has a whole school approach to phonics, grammar and spelling. Our school is resourced with each classroom having handbooks, charts, puppets, books etc to assist with implementing the program from Kindy through to Year Six.

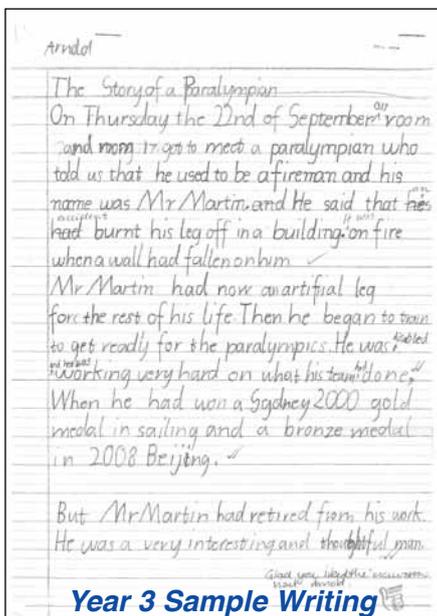
Firstly, I found the commitment the school made to the Jolly Program training made it easy for all teachers to work together to achieve the goals set for our children. The training was extensive and thorough and very enjoyable as it showed ways of engaging students through songs and movement and was lots of fun for the students. Phonics and Grammar are taught formally in specific timetabled lessons and informally throughout everyday learning across the curriculum.

I have found the step by step approach to learning letter sounds, blending and digraphs, learning letter formation and spelling tricky words have greatly assisted the children in learning to read and write.

The systematic teaching of spelling, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary have been evident in the students daily writing. Students are able to recognise and use parts of grammar in their reading and writing. Some examples are the use of nouns, verbs and pronouns, correct plural endings, short vowels and consonant doubling and alphabet order. As the teaching is multi-sensory and active the children learn through fun games and activities and well as using the many written resources such as worksheets and books.

As the end of the year is drawing closer I compare students writing samples from the beginning of the year to the present and am able to identify and show evidence to show improvements that have been made in the spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. Their reading results have been monitored throughout the year using the Waddington test, Key Links assessments and Hillcrest PS sight words and all children have made a marked improvement.

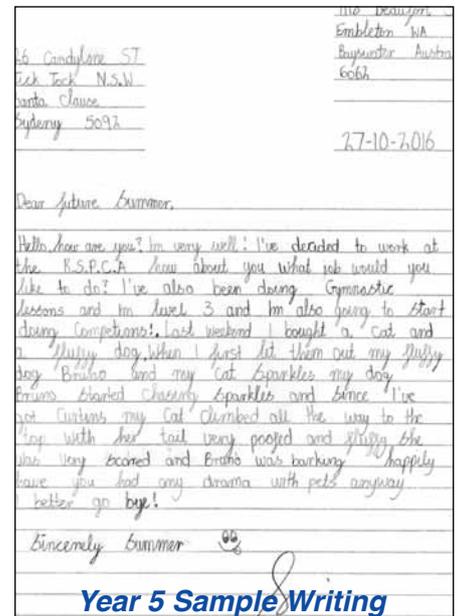
As the teachers of this school embrace the Jolly program I can only see continued progress as the students continue through their school years and would highly recommend this way of teaching reading and writing. The Jolly program has provided the whole school with a common language to teach our students to read and write through a fun and multi-sensory way.



Year 3 Sample Writing



Year 4 Sample Writing



Year 5 Sample Writing

The teacher's story



By Jade Lavery, Year 4/5



As a graduate teacher starting at the school I was nervous about implementing a program that I had never heard of before, but was surprised about how easy it was. It was simple to start with The Grammar Handbook, to keep the students' learning consistent, while I was catching up on the training the other staff in the school already had.

In the last 15 months I have taught in 2 classes of 9-11 year olds. Both of these classes had a large range of abilities but I found it easy to differentiate because the different levels are already set up. The students have a common language for phonics and grammar that they can use when working in either heterogeneous or homogeneous groups. Students also really enjoy the multi-sensory learning. Adding the colours and actions to the words really helps them make connections that they couldn't make with words alone.

A group of students in my class had a lot of trouble with parts of speech and punctuation, but are now able

to identify and use these because of the associated colours and actions – that is just how they are able to learn. Their confidence with these concepts has also grown and they are more willing to persevere when confronted with a new or difficult challenge.

As students are coming up through the years with more exposure to the Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar programs, it is easy to see their understanding and awareness of concepts that students with less experience with the programs haven't had.

Because the Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar programs are being implemented school-wide staff are able to use a common language to converse about what we are doing and how we can improve our teaching for the students' benefit. This type of collegial support makes me feel more confident in delivering the program, and I am sure that my students pick up on that confidence when we are working.



By Kirsty Cunningham, Year 5/6



I have been involved in using the "Jolly Phonics" program and "The Grammar Handbook" with junior and senior classes for the last few years at Hillcrest Primary School. One of the main things I have observed is the improvement in confidence when students are attempting to read a new word. Instead of stumbling over the sounds they are able to use their strong bank of sound and blend knowledge to pronounce the word correctly.

This has also had a flow-on effect with their writing. When students write a new word for the first time, they are more likely to choose the correct spelling of the sounds they hear. This improved confidence has led to some students in my current class winning writing and poetry competitions.

In the past I have used many different programs and often the words were not arranged in sound groups/blends. There were also words that I knew the students were never going to use in their own writing.

The Jolly spelling lists are grouped in a way that makes sense for students and the words are relevant to them. They appear in books they read and also in general conversation. Students see the purpose in learning these words.

The dictation activity is very good as it uses their spelling words in contexts that students could realistically use and usually includes a sentence containing speech marks as well which is good practise for students. I have seen a dramatic improvement in their sentence structure when writing.

I really like the way the grammar lessons use their current word lists (where possible) and build on prior knowledge. The worksheets and activities are motivating and clearly set out. A worked example is always included and the teachers' notes are very easy to understand. Many English as an Additional Language students have commented to me that they finally "get it" when it comes to grammar.

Why children find grammar fun



“I like doing Jolly Grammar because I learn lots of new sounds. We’ve been doing sounds and we need to practise them each day in our homework book and learn them for our test. We write down words in our language activity book. Nouns are black. We play shoot the sheriff to see who can say the words first. We learn about adjectives, pronouns, verbs, compound words and nouns.”

“Mrs G helps us to sound the words out and we write them down. At the end of the week we do a test and see if we can underline the nouns, verbs, adjectives and compound words without getting anything wrong. If we get them wrong we need to practise them.”

Daniel and Savvy, Year 3 (aged 7 and 8)

“Kahoots is a quiz site. We make up a quiz and give 4 options for a word. We have to find which one is spelt correctly. We use our spelling words to make them. Everyone loves the quizzes. It’s really awesome. You can make up your own name for you and your partner. “

“We do dictations, spelling and we have to break the words into syllables. We have spelling sheets and we have to write the words and there is a different activity each week. We get new words each week to practice and we have a test each Friday. For fitness, we play games using past tense. We make our own word searches with spelling words. We learnt about prepositions. We do anagrams. Grammar is lots of fun because we do lots of different things and it keeps it interesting.”

Roger and Ashley Year 6 (aged 11)



What parents have to say

“I love the Jolly Phonics songs. The kids google them at home and we all sing them together. I like that Jolly Grammar is aimed at all learning styles and is interactive. Through parent workshops, I have a better understanding of whats going on in the classrooms and the expectations.”

Naomi, with students in pre-Primary and Year 2

“I have found a positive result in the Jolly Grammar program. Michael seems to be improving and moving forward with his Grammar. I feel the program is relevant in learning.”

Sandy, with a student in Year 6

“My son uses the actions and sounds to learn Jolly Phonics. My older son has a great knowledge of grammar. I think the program is brilliant. I’m so glad I could see the results of research in our school. It’s so impressive. I see great results in sounding and phonics and my older son’s NAPLAN results clearly reflected great spelling and grammar. Parent workshops have helped me to understand what they are learning so I can ask the right questions to help them progress.”

Erica, with sons in Kindy and Year 3