

Think you can't teach children as young as four to read and write?

Here's the proof.

Femiloluwa Akindele
Nursery 2 pink

I like My house
I love my house
it is a red house in
the a 3 rooms
my house
my house is not good

Tuesday, 11th December, 2007
Toluwa ke Onadele
Nursery 2 Red

All about myself
My name is Toluwake
I am four years old
I am a girl
I am in corona school.
I am in nursery 2
My best friend is
Idomi.

Chidubem chris - okafor
I am in nursery 2 pink
My School
The name of my
School is corona day
Nursery Ikoyi
I love my school
I love my Teachers
my school is beautiful
We have beautiful
flowers in my school
my school is painted
red and gray

Nigeria: A Case Study

Jolly
Phonics

Can children as young as three learn to read and write?

A Nigerian school shows the way



When I was first told my school was going to teach Jolly Phonics, I thought “Oh, another set of books to introduce to the little ones just like all the others we have had.”

I have been teaching nursery children for 11 years and currently teach Nursery One at a Corona School in Lagos. I

have seen many teaching books in this time, but this was different.

The Jolly Phonics books were introduced to teachers through their Nigeria distributor, Chelis Bookazine, and we had a formal training session on how to use the material.

At this point, I began to re-think my views. I could see the sense in the progression and arrangement of the letter sounds. It is a completely different method from what I was used to. I went through The Phonics Handbook and it was then that I realised that using the programme would

“Parents questioned the changes, but it didn’t take long to win them over when they saw the results.”

bring big changes to the children’s literacy levels. Starting was not easy, though. I was already teaching letter sounds to the children, but I was teaching the letter names before the sounds and

teaching them in alphabetical order.

Teaching the Jolly Phonics way was completely different. Parents questioned the changes. I

had to explain the programme at Open Days, etc, to win their confidence as well as get the children to enjoy their literacy hour and monitor whether Jolly Phonics was helping them to read early. It didn’t take long to win over the parents as they soon saw the results of the programme. Their children would go home doing the different actions for each letter sound. It was always fun to see the smiles on their faces as they learned and grew in confidence. I noticed that they could identify the letter sounds with ease.

I have now used Jolly Phonics for some years and have found it easy to adapt to a Nigerian setting. The majority of children in my class can understand blending letter sounds to make words; some actually start reading short, simple sentences before they reach four years old. Although the Jolly Phonics

programme is for children from 4 years up I have been using it for some time with children as young as 3 and the children enjoy their lessons.

“Some could read short sentences before they reached four.”

Parents have become more interested in the Jolly Phonics

programme and some have actually bought The Phonics Handbook so they can keep abreast with what is going on at their children’s school.

Jolly Phonics has worked very well for me and now I am happy to invite others to spice up their literacy lessons with some jolly learning!

Abiola Akindede is a Nursery One teacher at Corona School, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.



“The best programme I’ve ever used”

Corona Day Nursery was established in 1955 and is one of the benchmark private nurseries in Lagos, Nigeria. Children are admitted into Nursery One from age 3-4 and proceed to Nursery Two after a year and then to primary school.

Children in the nursery had been learning letter sounds and had been encouraged to build words with the sounds. Reading had been progressing well, but only with those older than 4. We wanted to reach the younger children.

A few years ago all our teachers were invited to attend Jolly Phonics seminars and workshops

run by Tina Udoji, director of the Chelis Bookazine shop in Nigeria.

They turned reading at our school around.

Apart from the fact that Jolly Phonics complements the

“Jolly Phonics not only helps children to read, but also to develop the art of reading.”

Montessori method of teaching languages, the programme is highly effective and it has worked wonders with our children, especially the very young ones aged 2 and 3.

It is a unique method which makes lesson fun,

exciting and stimulating. Since we started using Jolly Phonics at Corona Day Nursery, the children have been reading faster and at a younger age too. The teachers find it easy to use because the workshop they attended made it clear how to teach it.

The children enjoy Jolly Phonics actions, songs, movies and other materials. The Jolly Dictionary teaches word meaning and pronunciation.

Jolly Phonics not only helps the children to read, but also to develop the art of reading. Parents are happy

with it because they enjoy seeing their children read at an early age.

The new plan to set up Jolly Phonics Children’s Clubs in schools will allow



children to develop even more interest for reading. I recommend Jolly

“We wanted to reach the younger children - the very young ones aged 2 and 3.”

Phonics to schools and teachers in Africa. I have tested it and I declare it the BEST that I have used so far.

Try it today in your school and at home and you will be convinced too!

Mrs Bose Sapara is head teacher of Corona Nursery School in Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria.

Pictured on the left is a pupil learning Jolly Phonics at Corona Nursery School.



A parent’s view: why my son looks forward to his Jolly Phonics classes every Sunday



My son is at Corona Nursery School and learnt to read with Jolly Phonics in Nursery One.

Before he started learning with Jolly Phonics, we had been thinking of teaching him with

the same home learning system that we had used for his older sister which meant she was able to read well by Nursery Two. However, we soon discovered that Jolly Phonics makes

learning to read and write fun for all children.

Jolly Phonics teaches the letter sounds in a way that is enjoyable and makes children able to pronounce irregular or ‘tricky

words’.

I can confidently say that my son now looks forward to his Jolly Phonics classes every Sunday.

Ngozi Udochukwu, parent

“The children were sounding out every word that was written on billboards”

I was looking for books for my school library when I stumbled on the Jolly Phonics materials corner in the Chelis Bookazine store. The display was bright and inviting. Its characteristic yellow colour really was jolly. I decided to attend a seminar on how to use the programme.

Before discovering Jolly Phonics I, like many other school managers and teachers, was used to the A-Z method of reading the alphabet - a for apple, b for banana, c for cat, etc. Learning the 42 sounds of the alphabet and blending them to form words was new to me.

I was excited by the seminar, but I was not yet convinced that I knew the programme well enough to be able to teach others, particularly young pupils. Despite my doubts, I started the programme at the beginning of the new session with children aged three and four. But I was nervous when the first lesson started. I was encouraged by the children's enthusiasm so I went ahead with the story line introducing

the first sound - sssss.

The children learned one new sound every day and spent the rest of the day practising excitedly.

Jolly Phonics' multisensory method makes it easy to learn. By the end of the first month, the children had learned many sounds and some of them had started blending. Initially the children struggled a little, but they soon overcame this hurdle.

Their parents were amazed at their children's response to this new 'game'. We were told that they tried to sound out every word written on billboards, signposts, etc. It was hard for some teachers to adapt to the new way of learning to read and write. They had difficulty, particularly with the sounds 'th' and 'er', but with constant practice, they got there. By age 4 or 5, most children were able to read fluently. Their handwriting improved tremendously and they could write independently. Some were slow learners and they had extra classes.

The pupils of Dornnie Private School are generally far ahead of

children at other schools who did not receive Jolly Learning. We have introduced Jolly

Grammar into the primary one scheme. New pupils who transfer from other schools are made to go through Jolly Phonics classes before joining the grammar class. The colourful Jolly Dictionary has also been very useful and the children love it.

The more classes a teacher gives, the more experience she acquires and the more excitement she brings to teaching of Jolly Phonics.

Dora Uzo is Proprietress of Dornnie Private School in Lagos, Nigeria



A multisensory, stress-free approach to literacy

I came across JollyPhonics for the first time in 1999 at the London International Book Fair. The programme fascinated me with its five basic skills of literacy, its multisensory approach and its structuring and order of the letter sounds, which makes reading and writing almost immediate.

I quickly contacted Chris Jolly, Jolly Phonics' publisher to ask about bringing the programme to Nigeria. He was unsure, but I persisted and in 2000, I was appointed the exclusive distributor of Jolly Phonics in Nigeria. By this time, I had been able to study the programme as thoroughly as I could.

Being a teacher myself, I quickly saw the huge potential for early literacy development in Nigeria. It was very tough trying to convince people in Nigeria that there could be a better way of teaching foundation literacy than chanting a, b, c... Gradually, however, some progressive teachers started using Jolly Phonics.

In 2003, Chris sent a Jolly Phonics trainer to Nigeria. That proved to be one of the most important steps in the growth of Jolly Phonics in Nigeria. The trainer was Marj Newbury. She was so effervescent and effective that we almost didn't let her go back to the UK!

She has come back to train Nigerian teachers four more times since.

In 2005, I became a Jolly Phonics trainer and began training teachers all over Nigeria, from Lagos and Abuja to Portharcourt and Warri.

Today, Jolly Phonics has dramatically changed the teaching of early literacy in Nigeria. Children across the country are now enjoying its multisensory, stress-free approach to literacy. We have also initiated the Jolly Phonics Children's Club to promote and reinforce literacy. The club now has over 400 members across Nigeria.

All this could not have been possible if I had not



had the most amazing team to work with. Our ultimate reward is the praise and success of teachers and parents who, like us, want the best literacy education for all Nigerian children.

Tina Udoji, education consultant, Jolly Phonics international trainer and sole distributor of Jolly Phonics in Nigeria.