

Jolly Phonics



Sh... What is the secret of their success?
Archbishop Andoh Roman Catholic Basic School
Ghana: A Case Study

Why Jolly Phonics in Ghana?



By Dr Prince Hamid Armah
**Executive Secretary: National Council
for Curriculum and Assessment**

English language is the medium of official communication in Ghana and is used as a lingua franca throughout the country.

Yet many Ghanaian children struggle to read with comprehension. In fact, a previous World Development Report on literacy skills assessment in 12 countries had estimated that four out of five grade 2 pupils in Ghana are unable to read a single familiar word. If children can't read, they can't learn, and they will consequently be more predisposed to being trapped in the pathway of poverty, despondency and joblessness.

The spoken English, however, is far better than the written English. This situation has been a significant concern to many stakeholders, particularly Ghana's Ministry of Education. Despite several interventions to support and improve the early language and literacy development of children in Ghana, very little improvement had been observed over the years. Although these interventions helped the older children to develop their spelling skills, they appeared too complicated for younger children to grasp. The need for a simpler approach for our pupils, therefore, became imperative.



Teacher Cynthia telling the story and modelling the action for the /sh/ sound.



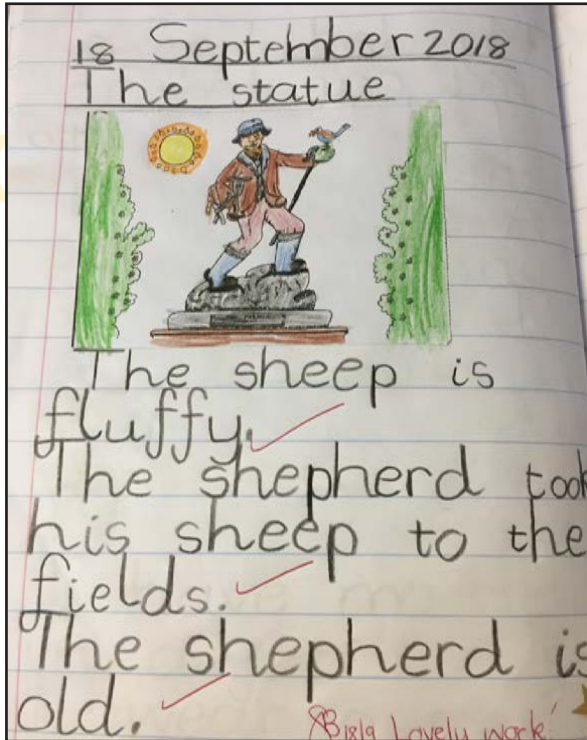
Kindergarten students showing the action for the /ck/ sound.

We recognized a more rigorous and systematic approach that is more appealing to our children was warranted. After successful pilots of the Jolly Phonics approach to reading in 11 government schools, and after representatives from both the Ghana Education Service and Ministry of Education attended the 2017 Jolly Learning International Conference in London, the Government of Ghana scaled up Jolly Phonics to 116 districts across the country.

At a Jolly Phonics Conference held in Ghana in 2018, government officials were amazed to see and hear Jolly Phonics pupils reading any written material given to them. Pupils were even able to read the written speech by the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service! It changed everything. Although phonics was not completely new to us, the pace at which Jolly Phonics is taught was a major factor in the improvement in the pupils. It gave us confidence to reflect on our current language and literacy programme, and in view of the impressive results, the Ministry of Education is taking steps for the adoption of Jolly Phonics to raise the level of achievement in literacy across Ghana.

We feel that proper training is crucial to success! This is why, as part of the roll-out plan of our new curriculum, we have initiated the training of all kindergarten and primary teachers in Jolly Phonics.

My Jolly Phonics journey



A piece of children's written work focusing on the /sh/ sound.

By Roberta Amos-Abanyie

**Jolly Phonics Professional Trainer,
Founder and CEO of IGNIT Jolly
Phonics Foundation**



In 2007 as a head teacher, I knew we needed to improve the reading standards of the children in the school, so I began looking at training options for my staff. It was not until August 2011, when I attended a Jolly Phonics workshop organised by Minerva Books, that I improved my understanding of my previous phonics knowledge. I immediately changed my method of teaching reading and writing to using just Jolly Phonics. I soon noticed children between the ages of 2 and 5 years were enjoying their Jolly Phonics lesson and began improving at a much quicker pace. I introduced Jolly Phonics in my after school programme children who had learning challenges. Within 6 weeks they were able to decode regularly spelt words with ease, soon after comfortably reading from the Jolly Phonics Red Level Readers. It built confidence for the struggling or challenged children.

This made me decide to introduce this to a district government school in the Ashanti region. Since all

government schools were used to the A-Z method of reading the alphabet, I wanted to know if Jolly Phonics would work just as well. After discussing the doubts in the minds of local Education Officers and teachers, we provided training, implemented the pilot and provided mentoring and monitoring to selected schools. Compared to the traditional way of learning one sound a week, with Jolly Phonics children of 4 and 5 years learnt one new sound a day. Each sound being introduced using a story, an action, the flashcard and a song,

At the end of the first week, the engagement and excitement from the children looking forward to learning a new sound everyday made teachers more than ready to use Jolly Phonics! By the end of the first month, the children had started identifying sounds in words, writing, blending to read simple words and even reading simple phrases. Initially, the children struggled with our high expectations but eventually overcame this with gradual and daily practise. Their handwriting improved tremendously and they were beginning to write independently at a much earlier stage. This soon led to piloting Jolly Phonics in other districts where interest was expressed due to the good feedback from the initial pilot!

Most recently in Ghana, Jolly Phonics has been included in the new Ghana Education Service curriculum. Jolly Phonics is changing the foundation of children's literacy education across the country.



Kindergarten students practising writing a new sound

Our Jolly Phonics journey



By Dr Busola Eshiet

**Jolly Phonics Professional Trainer,
Founder of Optimalpath Consulting**

My relationship with Jolly Phonics started as a coincidence but my continued use and indeed, my becoming a promoter for Jolly Phonics is a deliberate decision.

It all began with feeling some deep frustration about the poor reading skills of children in Nigerian public schools, so I began teaching a group of children in an after-school setting using traditional methods. There was some improvement but not enough to justify the time and energy used on teaching them. I decided to research a more effective way of teaching reading to beginning learners whose first language is not English and came across the Jolly Phonics programme as well as 'Jolly Futures'.

The Jolly Futures offer, to pilot the Jolly Phonics programme in government schools, provides free Jolly Phonics resources to both children and teachers in developing countries and pays the trainer cost too! With the support of Jolly Learning Ltd, I took the offer to some states in Nigeria and was able to fully implement it in four states. The next place on my mind was Ghana!

Jolly Learning Ltd offers opportunities to be connected to a huge family of Jolly Trainers from all over the world. I met Roberta at one of the Jolly Phonics International Trainers Conference and realised we both wanted to raise the level of achievement for as many children as possible. Without hesitation I accepted an offer to collaborate between my organisation and Roberta's. Over the



Teacher Cynthia practising the action for the /sh/ sound with students.



Kindergarten students working in their Jolly Phonics Pupil Book 1

years we have collaborated tirelessly to make Jolly Phonics available in Ghana. We see happy teachers of Jolly children, all of them achieving great results. We are set to take Jolly Phonics to all of Ghana.

From there, as a team we are implementing country-wide rollouts in Sierra Leone and Liberia, with the prospect of the same with interested Francophone countries

Jolly Phonics is making a huge difference in the literacy landscape of Ghana and indeed, West Africa.

By Alex Reimmer

**Jolly Phonics Distributor and
Stockist - Minerva Books**



Jolly Phonics is doing very well in Ghana; I can confidently say approximately 70% of private schools in the country are now using this programme. Every year I find that more and more private schools start their Pre-school with the Jolly Phonics Programme.

12 years ago I became the first Jolly Phonics Distributor in Ghana. My plan and strategy was to make frequent walk-in visits to schools. I started by visiting schools daily but soon realized to gain the most success, I would need some time in the week free for special appointments. I continued with the strategy of midweek school visits; little did I know that in one month, I would make contact with forty eight schools! This was achieved by engaging the head of school or assistant who can take a decision on behalf of the owner. I would introduce them to the unique and fun way to teach the Jolly Phonics

Our Jolly Phonics journey



Teacher Cynthia modelling air writing for a new sound

programme and provide them with catalogues and information to register for Jolly Phonics Training. Immediately after attending our organized and informative training sessions, participants became convinced and satisfied with Jolly Phonics and ordered resources so they could implement it in their school.

Later, an opportunity came to me from a school owner who happened to be a current Council Member for government schools in a particular Ghanaian District. She invited all of her colleagues in the council, including the District Director, to attend her school's speech and prize giving day. It was there that the District Director noticed how the 3 to 6 year olds were able to read their speeches and recite their poems with tremendous diligence and eloquence. She asked how her students were able to read confidently without any struggle. The simple response was "JOLLY PHONICS". The District Director invited me to her office to introduce the Jolly Phonics programme into government schools.



By Elizabeth Akowuah
Early Childhood Coordinator for
Ghana Education Service

At my appointment as the Early Childhood Coordinator for the Tema Education Office in September 2016, I felt

duty-bound to embark on a familiarization tour of the Kindergarten set-ups in the government basic schools to ascertain the challenges facing them and to devise effective means to properly address them.

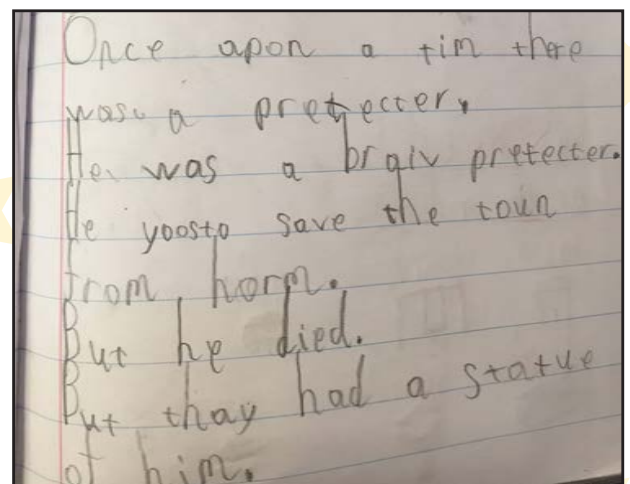
Poor reading skills were identified as the major

problem facing the pupils at that level. This was a result of the fact that teachers lacked the basic skills needed to teach students how to read and write effectively. In tackling the problem, a workshop on the Jolly Phonics method, which has been systematically designed for effective reading skills, was organized for all Kindergarten teachers in the metropolis.

Roberta from INGIT Jolly Phonics Foundation conducted training. Teachers were taken through the basic skills needed to teach reading and writing. Monitoring visits to the schools occurred later to ascertain the impact of the workshop on the pupils' ability to read, which showed a tremendous improvement! Most of the pupils were able to say the sound with their accompanying action, were able to pronounce simple words, and read simple sentences to the admiration of the assessing Coordinator. Based on this achievement, I organized a reading competition for all Kindergarten pupils. It was amazing to see and hear these little ones pronounce words like "Shipwreck", "dwindling" and "blender", e.t.c.

The parents present were enthusiastic about the performance of the pupils and asked that Jolly Phonics be inculcated in the curriculum. They see how it can build a solid foundation for our educational system. The core skills learnt in Jolly Phonics are also being used to help Junior and High School pupils who have reading difficulties.

Jolly Phonics has given our pupils an amazing boost in their reading skills. In a nutshell, it is a magical approach for effective reading and writing.



A piece of children's written work writing in full sentences

Success with Jolly Phonics



Archbishop Andoh Roman Catholic Basic School is a government school for children aged 4-11 years and is situated in the heart of Tema. Community and faith are the backbone of the school, working hand-in-hand with one another. All members of the community - parents, teachers, priests and administrators - are focused on providing students with an education that will prepare their students for the world in which they live.

“Long before the implementation of the Jolly Phonics programme, the school was used to the old way of hearing the sounds of only the letters of the alphabet, without actions or stories. Jolly Phonics as a method of instruction was introduced in my school in 2015, after the kindergarten and lower primary teachers had been taken through training on how to use the method to teach in their classrooms.

During the training workshop, I embraced the concept whole-heartedly as I saw that it was enjoyable to teach and could see the benefit to the children to blend sounds to form words much earlier. Due to this, I encouraged my teachers who attended the training to try their best to use the Jolly Phonics.

I organized an in-service training for all teachers on the programme with a focus on using it to help those with reading disabilities. Without any doubts, it has helped. Thanks to Jolly Phonics, I can hold my head high and say that 85% of the pupils in the lower primary can read simple passages they have not seen



before. Most pupils blend words within the shortest possible time. Jolly Phonics has helped pupils be self-motivated and confident to read.”

*By Pearl Akua Agyemang,
Principal of Archbishop Andoh
Roman Catholic Basic School*

“I was familiar with only the letter name and single letter sounds until 2016 when the Catholic Educational Unit organised a workshop on Jolly Phonics for all the Kindergarten teachers in the district.

I downloaded the Jolly Phonics Lessons App on my phone and started practising it before school resumed in the new academic year. When I started teaching with Jolly Phonics, I felt blessed I had a method of teaching to improve the results of my pupils. They were motivated to be in school because they learnt a new sound with a story, an action and a song, everyday. Parents came to me to know what magic was working with their kids because they would share the new sounds and songs at home, as well as teach their younger siblings! I told them it was Jolly Phonics.

At the beginning of the second term, 40% of pupils had started reading short sentences by breaking the words down into their sounds. Now we are in term 3 and 70% of pupils are reading simple sentences perfectly. My children at home are also benefitting from my knowledge in Jolly Phonics which I am teaching them each day. I am so grateful for the training and follow up visits from the Jolly Phonics team here in Ghana.”

*By Cynthia Asante Assiemah,
Kindergarten Teacher at Archbishop
Andoh Roman Catholic Basic School*

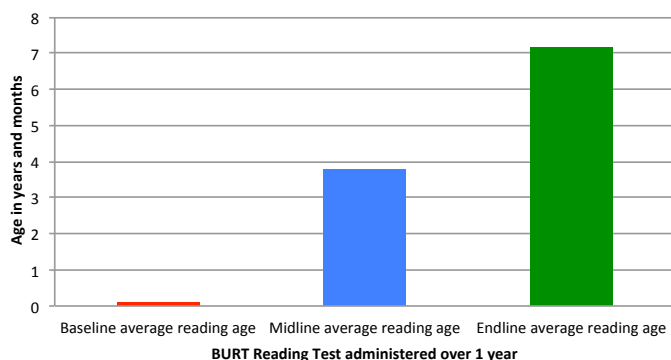


Archbishop Andoh Roman Catholic Basic School badge and school logo.

The Impact of Jolly Phonics

At the start of the year the average reading age was 0 years, showing none of the students were able to read English. At the end of the school year, the average reading age rose to 7 years; which compared to their average actual age of 5 and a half years, it meant these students had progressed substantially over the year and were reading well above their actual age.

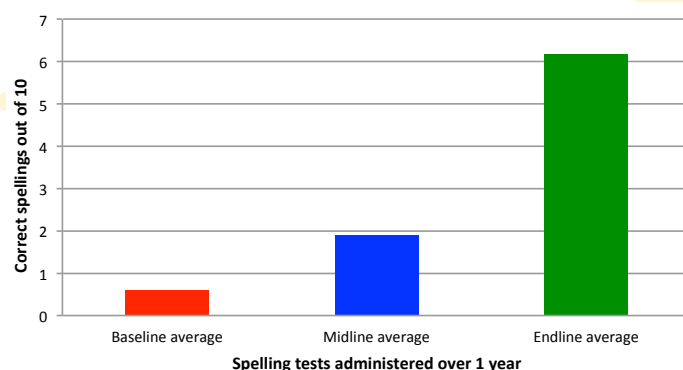
**BURT Reading Test Average Age
(progress over one year)**



The students were tested three times across the year using the standardized BURT Reading Test to establish baseline, midline and endline scores. These scores provide a reading age dependant on the number of words correctly read from a list of decodable and irregular words.

Not only did students improve in their reading, Jolly Phonics helped to improve their spelling across the year. Students were given the same 10 words to spell correctly at three different points in the year. At the start of the year, the average number of words spelt correctly was 0, which rose to 2 words out of 10 halfway through the year, and children were, on average, able to spell 6 words out of 10 by the end of the year.

**Average number of word spelt correctly out of 10
(progress over one year)**



It is clear from these results that the programme supports students to progress considerably in their reading and writing of English, after only one year of teaching using Jolly Phonics.

What parents had to say

"I am convinced without a shadow of doubt that Jolly Phonics is an impressive programme. My daughter Bryna is a living testimony of the effectiveness of this programme. She had been in pre-school for two years but could only identify seven letter names of the English alphabet. As parents we were alarmed so changed her school. We enrolled her in Archbishop Andoh Kindergarten, where she was introduced to Jolly Phonics. In the space of one term, my daughter could identify and write all 42 sounds, and had the skills to use these sounds to read simple words. She is now teaching her 18 month-old sister and their interactions are priceless."

By Hannah Imbeah, a grateful mother



"Jolly Phonics has helped my son Angel in many ways. The most obvious was his newly found interest in reading. He can read anything he comes across without difficulty and is now happy and confident to do so. He reads very fluently which makes me proud. It has also helped him to improve his pronunciation to the extent that he corrects everyone in the house, including his father and me! He insists that everyone pronounces words into the individual phonic sounds; therefore making it clear to him they are pronouncing the word correctly! Angel is also able to spell words above his level by breaking them into syllables and then into sounds."

By Mrs Mabel Apetu, mother of Angel Dornu Mawulolo Apetu



Jolly Futures

What is Jolly Futures?

Jolly Futures is a project to enable young children to read and write in English, right across sub-Saharan Africa. It is currently in 19 countries. It has a high record of achievement, is enjoyable, and is cost effective.

The UK-based publisher, Jolly Learning Ltd, funds this project. They provide the Jolly Phonics programme they publish, a programme that is sold extensively around the world.

The project starts with a pilot to win support, by demonstrating what can be achieved. The materials are provided for free, along with the costs of the trainer. As you can see in this case study, government school Archbishop Andoh Basic Roman Catholic School have found that using Jolly Phonics resulted in higher performances from the students, better attitudes to teaching from the teachers and positive feedback from the parents.

Due to fantastic results in the pilots in Ghana, this led first to district adoptions, and now the whole-country adoption of the Jolly Phonics programme for all government primary schools.

The materials provided without charge are a Teacher's Book, Pupil Books 1 and 2, Finger Phonics Big Books 1-7, a Tricky Word Poster and a Jolly Phonics Sounds Wall Chart as illustrated below.



Contacts:

Cara Fairhall, Project Coordinator, Jolly Futures:
Chris Jolly, Managing Director, Jolly Futures:

cara@jollylearning.co.uk
chris@jollylearning.co.uk

Our goal is to enable all children, early in primary school anywhere, to be able to read and write English.



Jolly Learning Ltd Tailours House, High Road, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 6DL, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 8501 0405 Email: info@jollylearning.co.uk