

2021 Phonics Screening Exercise Nigeria Report



Appreciation

Universal Learning Solutions would like to appreciate all those that took part in the 2021 Phonics Screening Exercise and ensured that it was successfully carried out in nearly all states of the Nigerian federation.

For their Leadership, funding, and logistical support:
Universal Basic Education Commission.
State Universal Basic Education Boards.

For their professionalism in the assessment process:
All the 1,625 assessors across the country.

For their coordination of the assessments and assessor training:
All State Jolly Phonics Monitoring Teams.

Executive Summary

It is our great pleasure to present to you the findings of what we believe to be the largest assessment of Early Grade pupils reading and writing skills that has been carried out in Africa to date.

When we carried out the first pilot study into the effectiveness of Jolly Phonics in Government primary schools in Nigeria back in 2006, we were amazed by the impact that this method had on literacy levels and our vision back then was to scale the method across all of Nigeria.

Today, I am very proud that, with support from the Universal basic education Commission (UBEC) and Jolly Learning Ltd, this vision has been delivered, with all of Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory now implementing large-scale Jolly Phonics interventions. A total of 167,271 teachers and 6,308 officials have now received our training, thereby potentially reaching 13.6 million pupils and making Jolly Phonics, by far, the largest literacy project in Africa.

However, it is not enough for us here at Universal learning Solutions and we are always obsessing to learn more about the true impact of our work. In order to understand this better, in 2018, we carried out the first ever Phonics screening exercise in Nigeria. This exercise uses the good practice developed in the UK and implemented in all schools there to assess the reading skills of pupils. The 2021 Phonics screening exercise follows on from, and significantly builds upon, the 2019 exercise through testing far more pupils and also including a Hausa test component for the Northern Nigeria states where this is the language of the environment.

The fact that we were able to carry out assessments of over 156,000 pupils is testament to the hard work and incredible levels of dedication of our “Jolly Team” of 1625 assessors across the country. We are humbled and grateful to each one of them for all of their sacrifice.

The results of this exercise speak for themselves and show us, and hopefully the wider global education community, that Jolly Phonics is continuing to radically transform literacy levels in some of the most difficult environments, such as the North-East of Nigeria. We can also see from this report that this transformation is not only on English reading and writing, but also for Hausa, which makes our impact even more profound.

Despite the terrible negative impact that the coronavirus pandemic has on access to education and wider learning, the results highlighted in this report act as a beacon of hope and show what is possible with a combination of high levels of government support, affordable learning materials and a not-for-profit approach to implementation.

It is our hope that, one day, the world will know more about how, with the right approach, Jolly Phonics can be used to solve some one of the greatest challenges faced by humanity – illiteracy – and that our work will gain the attention that it so richly deserves. Please help play a part in this and share this report with any of your friends and colleagues who you feel may be interested. Should you wish to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our sincere thanks again to all of the teachers, pupils, officials and policy makers who have supported the Jolly Phonics project in Nigeria over the last 15 years. We hope you are proud of what this report shows that we have achieved.



A girl doing the /h/ sound and action using prompt from Jolly Monitor phone app

Contents

Appreciation	i
Executive Summary	i
List of Figures	iv
List of Tables	iv
Introducing the Phonics Screening Exercise	1
Background to The Nigeria Jolly Phonics Programme	3
Other Literacy Interventions in Nigeria	Error! Bookmark not defined.
What is a Phonics Screening Exercise?	4
The Tests	5
Letter Sounds Test	5
Word Reading Test.....	5
Assessment Process/Methodology	Error! Bookmark not defined.
English Phonics Assessment Results	6
Letter Sounds Test	6
Word Reading Test.....	7
Phonics Screening 2021 vs Phonics Screening 2019 Results	8
ULS Assessment Target Attainment	9
Hausa Phonics Assessment Results	11
Letter Sounds Test	11
Word Reading Test.....	12
Discussion of Results	13
Recommendations	14
Appendix A - English Mean Score Comparisons by State	15
Appendix B – Hausa Mean Score Comparisons by State	19

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Letter Sound Test for Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics pupils	6
Figure 2 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Word Reading Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils	7
Figure 10 - Comparison of English Sounds Test Mean Scores in 2019 and 2021.....	8
Figure 11 - Comparison of Word Reading Test Mean Scores 2019 and 2021.....	8
Figure 12 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Hausa Letter Sounds Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils	11
Figure 13 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Hausa Word Reading Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils	12
Figure 21 – Comparison ECCD Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State	15
Figure 22 – Comparison Primary 1 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State	16
Figure 23 – Comparison Primary 2 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State	17
Figure 24 – Comparison Primary 3 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State	18
Figure 25 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 1 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	19
Figure 26 - Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 1 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	19
Figure 27 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 2 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	20
Figure 28- Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 2 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	20
Figure 29 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 3 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	21
Figure 30 - Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 3 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils	21

List of Tables

Table 1: sample size for each year group for Jolly Phonics and control groups in English and Hausa tests.....	2
Table 2 – 2019 Letter Sounds Test Target Attainment.....	9
Table 3 – 2021 Letter Sounds Test Target Attainment.....	9
Table 4 – 2019 Word Reading Test Target Attainment	10
Table 5 – 2021 Word Reading Test Target Attainment	10

Introducing the Phonics Screening Exercise

The Phonics Screening Exercise is designed to quickly establish whether a pupil has acquired the essential phonics skills that provide the foundation for becoming a fluent reader who can effectively read to learn in English. The exercise is comprised of two tests. First, the Letter Sounds Test which provides 40 decodable words that the pupils have to read one-by-one, with 20 being real decodable words, such as “pan”, and 20 being invented decodable words, such as “fis”. The second is a simple Letter Sounds Test to provide further insight on pupils’ phonics ability.

In 2018, Universal Learning Solutions Initiative piloted the administering of the UK Government’s “Phonics Screening Check” in 80 schools in Kano State. Working with 10 Government School Support Officers from Kano State it was possible to assess almost 3,000 pupils in 80 schools in both the Word Reading and Letter Sounds Tests using a smartphone application. The feedback from these 10 officials was extremely positive, with all recommending that this “Phonics Screening Exercise” should be scaled across the whole country as a way to gather broader impact and general pupil literacy data.

In June 2019, the Jolly Phonics project teams in all states in Nigeria, and officials in some states, administered the Phonics Screening Exercise to over 60,000 Nigerian pupils. The results demonstrated a very positive impact for the Jolly Phonics Project when compared with non-Jolly Phonics control schools. Unfortunately, in 2020 all activities were put on hold because of far reaching school closures due to the Coronavirus pandemic, but by 2021 most children were back in school and ULS were able to organise the Phonics Screening Exercise again.

Over the course of July and August 2021, a total of 1,625 assessors, comprising the state project teams and trained officials, were able to carry out over 155,000 Phonics Screening assessments on ECCD to Primary 3 pupils. Jolly Phonics has been taught in many states for several years so many pupils from Primary 1 to Primary 3 have been taught the methodology at some stage, if not each year.

A significant addition to the Phonics Screening Exercise in 2021 has been the inclusion of Hausa Letter Sounds and Hausa Word Reading Tests in states where Hausa is the main language of the environment. The Letter Sounds Test assesses pupils’ knowledge of the 35 phonemes in the Hausa language. As with the English test, the Hausa word assessment is composed of 40 words, containing both made-up decodable words, such as “sazi”, and common decodable Hausa words, such as “gyaɗa”. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the number of assessments conducted for the English and Hausa tests.

Table 1: sample size for each year group for Jolly Phonics and control groups in English and Hausa tests.

Year Group	Jolly Phonics Pupils Assessments	Control Group Assessments	Jolly Phonics Pupils Assessments	Control Group Assessments
	English Tests		Hausa Tests	
ECCD	10,826	4,064	2,738	1,320
Primary 1	23,216	3,212	5,912	946
Primary 2	22,646	2,833	5,585	859
Primary 3	17,740	4,320	4,440	1,343

This report presents an evaluation of the impact of the Nigeria Jolly Phonics Programme on pupils’ literacy skills across the country. The evaluation is based on the results of the Phonics Screening Exercise collected from the tests conducted in 2021. It will also compare the results from the 2019 Phonics Screening Exercise to determine whether progress is being made. The report will also evaluate the impact of other literacy interventions, and how they have interacted with Jolly Phonics to influence the mean scores of pupils in each year group. We believe that the assessment methodology is sufficiently rigorous to provide an accurate representation of the impact of Jolly Phonics on pupils’ literacy skills in Nigeria.



Assessor using the Jolly Monitor phone app for Hausa assessments

Background to The Nigeria Jolly Phonics Programme

The Jolly Phonics Project is an English early grade literacy project that has been scaled to every state in Nigeria under a partnership between the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the UK and Nigeria registered social enterprise Universal Learning Solutions (ULS). As of the end of 2021, 161,379 Early Years to Primary 3 government school teachers in Nigeria have been trained, resourced and supported to use Jolly Phonics under this partnership, potentially benefitting around 13 million pupils. The project has been mostly funded through the UBEC Teacher Professional Development (TPD) fund, following initial significant support from the publisher of Jolly Phonics – Jolly Learning Ltd – who have also now provided UBEC with the right to print the Jolly Phonics materials freely. Recently, the project has also been incorporated into the World Bank funded Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the Better Education Service Delivery For All (BESDA) programmes.

The project aims to rapidly increase pupils' initial literacy skills through the teaching of synthetic phonics via the Jolly Phonics programme. Jolly Phonics teaches this proven method through child-centred, fun and interactive strategies, such as stories, songs, actions and games. The Jolly Phonics materials for the first round of trained teachers and their pupils were originally donated by the publishers and are now being provided by UBEC and state governments through a free licence that the company has donated to the Nigerian government. Because the materials are black and white, they are very cheap and easy to print, meaning that their use in classrooms is sustainable. In addition to training and materials, ULS works intensively following the training to ensure that the teachers have the necessary follow-up support to ensure high quality literacy tuition. This is done through a range of strategies, such as regular coaching visits to schools from a dedicated team and trained officials, cluster meetings, prizes for the best performing teachers, provision of free smartphone applications, WhatsApp groups and regular SMS messaging.

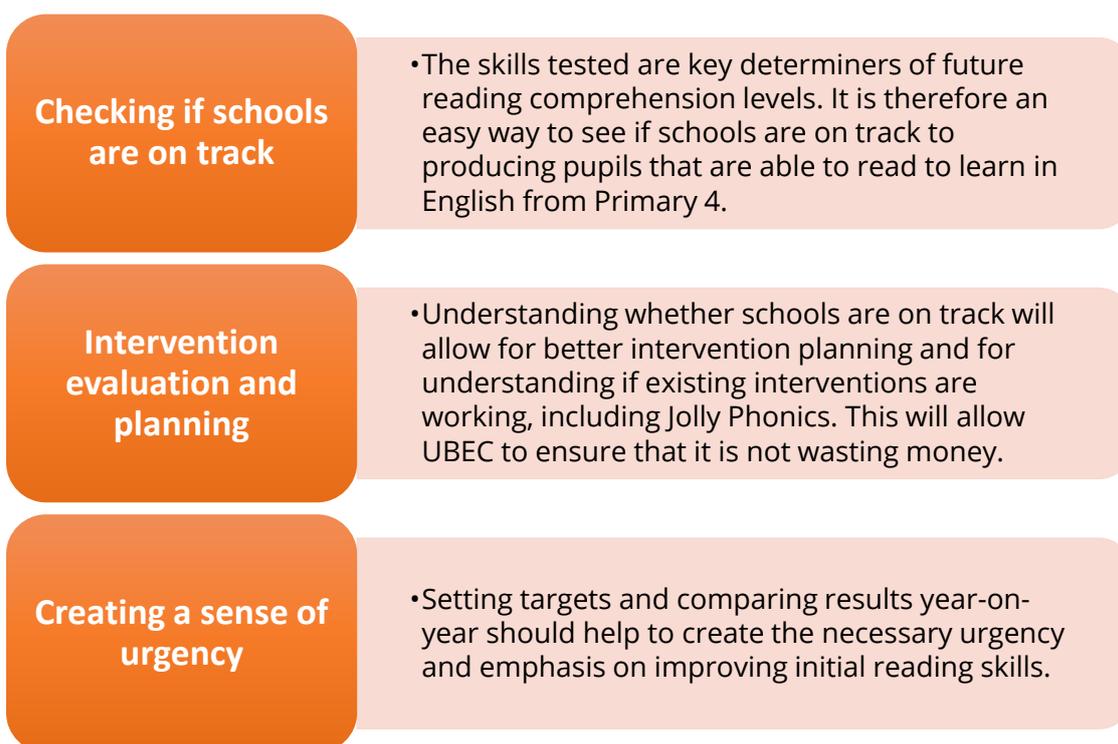
Monitoring and evaluation have always been essential components of our projects and this helps to ensure that stakeholders understand the impact of the intervention. We collect a wide range of monitoring data during all of our activities, including school visits. ULS first organised the national Phonics Screening Exercise in 2019 and the goal is to conduct the assessments at the end of each academic year. Unfortunately, it was put on hold in 2020 due to school closures across Nigeria, but in 2021 ULS have been able to assess pupils across the federation again. The model for the assessments presents a reliable and accurate representation of the impact of Jolly Phonics on pupils' literacy skills, which is outlined in this report.

What is a Phonics Screening Exercise?

A Phonics Screening Exercise is a way for teachers and the government to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress with their phonics skills to read words and that they are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for learning and for pleasure. It involves testing Primary 1, 2, and 3 pupils' letter sound knowledge and blending skills, which are key initial literacy skills that provide the foundation for the development of further literacy skills, such as fluency and reading comprehension.

In the RTI report, "Early Reading: Igniting Education for All", Gove et al explain that reading development occurs in stages, with Stage 1 being "Decoding", which is described as where the child *"grows aware of sound/symbol relationships; focuses on printed symbols; attempts to break code of print; uses decoding to figure out words"*.¹ This is exactly what a Phonics Screening Exercise assesses; whether pupils have successfully reached stage 1 and so have started their reading development journey.

There are many reasons why this check is beneficial, including:



¹ Gove, A. and P. Cvelich. 2010. *Early Reading: Igniting Education for All*. A report by the Early Grade Learning Community of Practice. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, Page 5

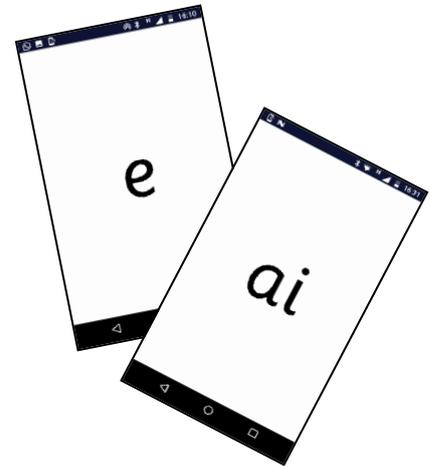
The Tests

The pupils were assessed using two distinct tests. There were:

1. Letter Sounds Test
2. Word Reading Test

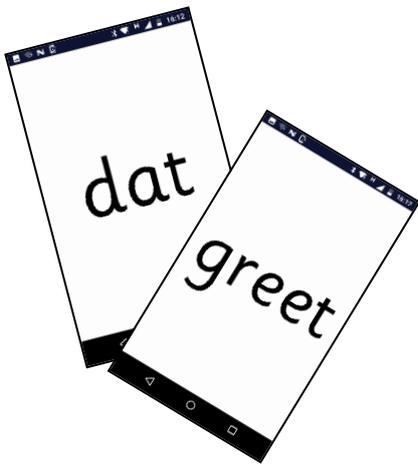
Letter Sounds Test

The Letter Sounds Test assesses the pupil's knowledge of the letter sounds of the English language. Within this specific test, pupils were presented with 41 different letters or combination of letters (i.e. digraphs, such as /ai/) that represent individual sounds. They were asked to say the sound that the letter makes when reading it, and not the name of the letter (how it is said in the alphabet). The test gradually got harder for the pupil, with the most simple or common sounds in the first half, and the more difficult ones in the second half.



Word Reading Test

The Word Reading Test used was the UK Government's "Phonics Screening Check". This test assesses the pupil's ability to read 40 distinct words. These words contain both made-up decodable words, such as "jub", and common decodable English words, such as "chop". Decodable means that the sounds in the words follow the standard English sound system, and so do not contain any irregularities in their spelling. If a pupil can read the words, it means that they know the sounds in them and have the skill of being able to blend sounds together to read words. The test again gets harder in the second half, with the more simple words being presented in the first half.



The pupil stimulus for both tests was displayed on the Jolly Monitor App, with each letter sound or word appearing on the app one-by-one, as can be seen in the pictures.

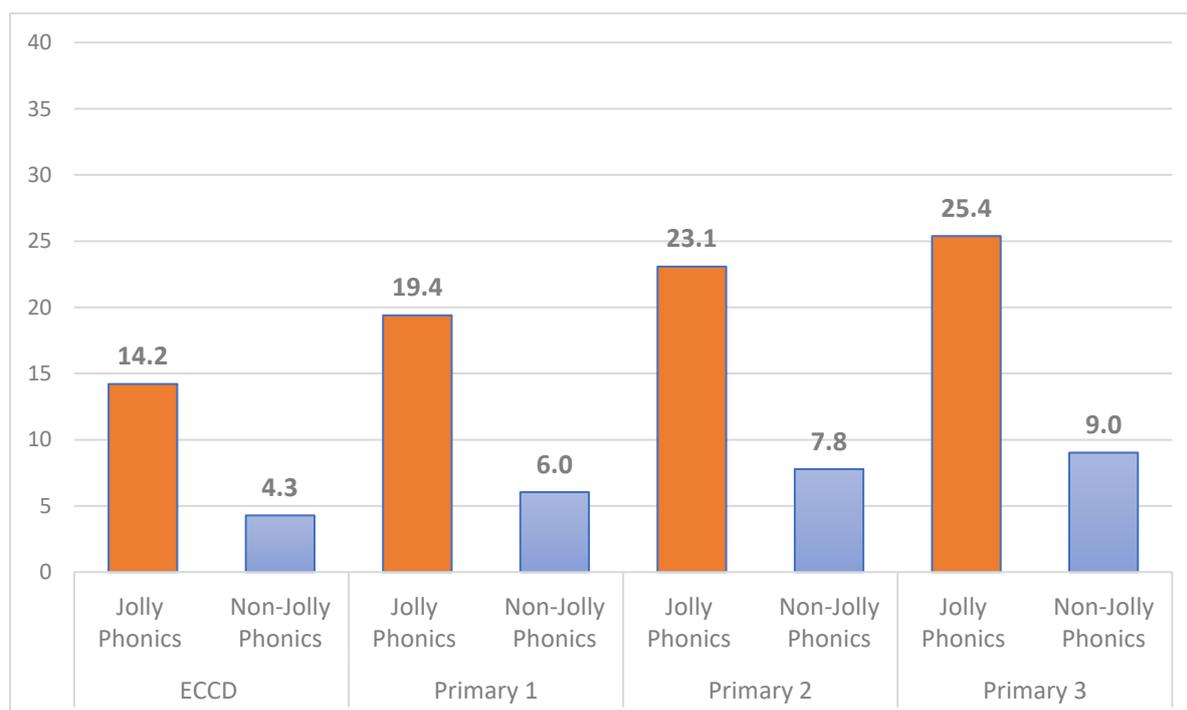
English Phonics Assessment Results

This section of the report presents the key findings of the data collected during the Phonics Screening Exercise. The data has been taken from the Jolly Monitor Dashboard and has been used to generate the following charts and tables for a detailed analysis of the results. The national mean scores from the Letter Sounds Test are presented first, followed by the Word Reading Test. Finally, the disaggregation of the data will explore the impact of student and teacher variables on the mean scores for each year group.

Letter Sounds Test

The below bar chart (figure 1) compares the Letter Sound Test national mean scores for each year group, ECCD to Primary 3, for both Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics pupils. It is evident that Jolly Phonics pupils score substantially better than those who are not learning with Jolly Phonics.

Figure 1 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Letter Sound Test for Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics pupils

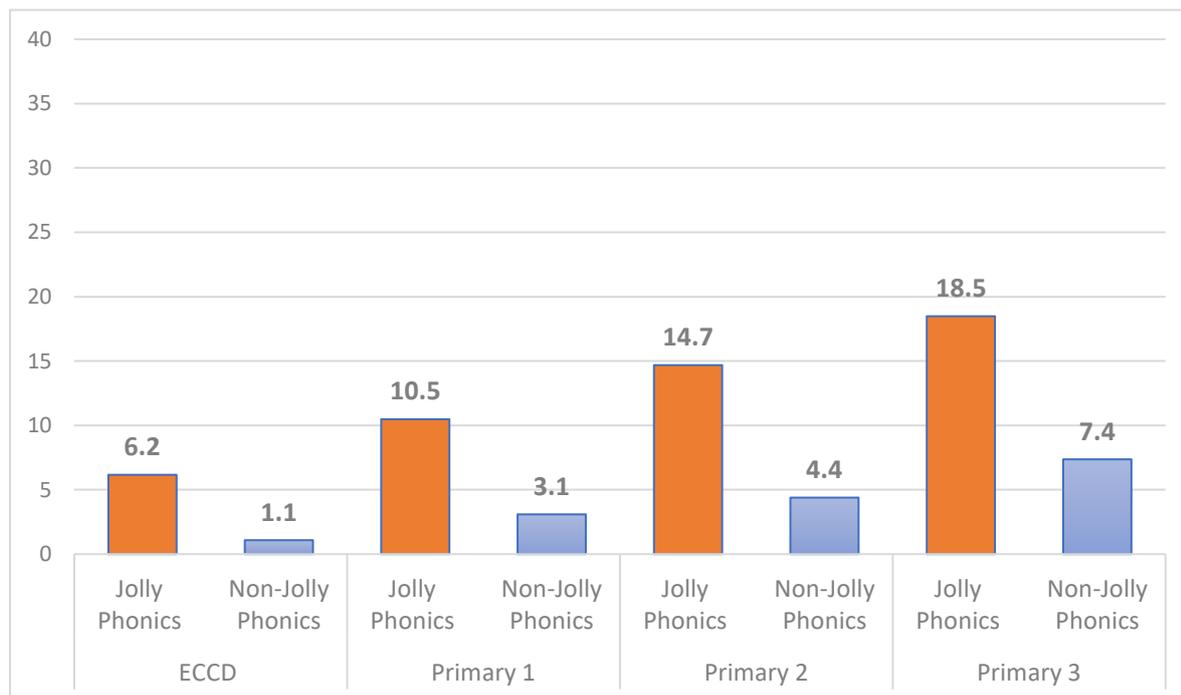


Pupils from ECCD to Primary 3 who have been taught with Jolly Phonics were able to identify up to three times as many sounds as their peers in control schools. In contrast, non-Jolly Phonics pupils appear to make minimal progress in their sounds' knowledge across the years. This essential skill is needed to decode words to be able to read and write.

Word Reading Test

The below bar chart (figure 2) compares the Word Reading Test national mean scores for each year group, ECCD to Primary 3, for both Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics pupils. In all year groups, Jolly Phonics pupils are again scoring much higher than those pupils not taught with Jolly Phonics.

Figure 2 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Word Reading Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils



The scores on the Words Assessment are not as high as those in the Sounds Assessment across all four year groups but we still see progression from year to year among Jolly Phonics taught pupils and so they are clearly developing their blending and decoding skills.

Jolly Phonics taught pupils scored significantly higher than non-Jolly Phonics pupils who displayed poor blending skills; non-Jolly Phonics Primary 3 pupils were only able to identify 1.2 words more than Jolly Phonics ECCD pupils. While Jolly Phonics pupils still scored higher than their peers, the national mean scores still fall short of the targets for each year group and show a need for further instruction and practice of blending skills. See the section below on 'ULS Assessment Target Attainment' for more details.

The scores are in line with what we have witnessed throughout the monitoring of the intervention since inception.

Phonics Screening 2021 vs Phonics Screening 2019 Results

The first national Phonics Screening Exercise took place in 2019 but was put on hold in 2020 due to school closures. At that time Primary 1-Primary 3 pupils were assessed, but ECCD pupils were not. Below is a comparison of the results from 2019 and 2021.

Figure 3 - Comparison of English Sounds Test Mean Scores in 2019 and 2021.

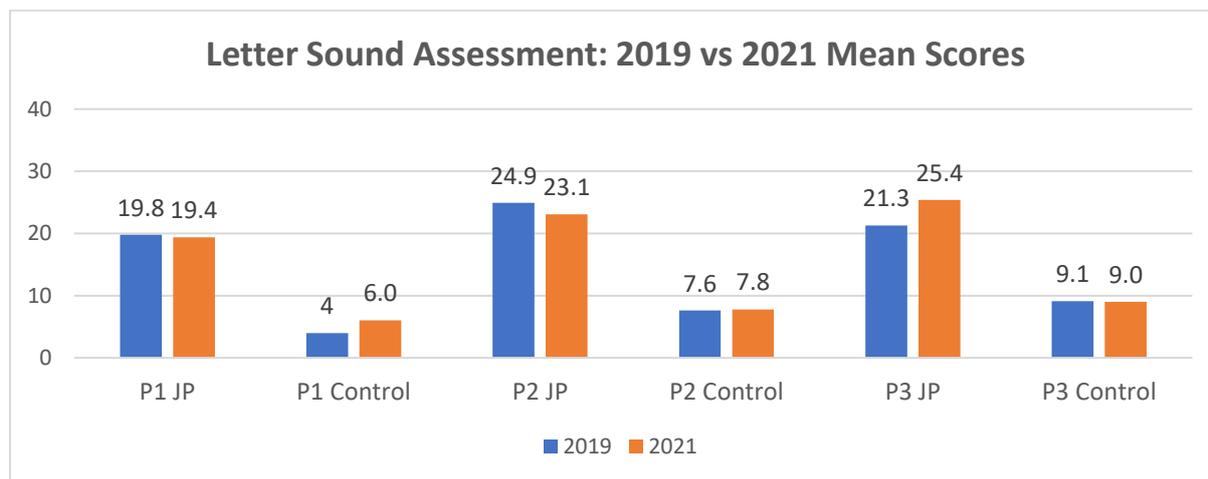
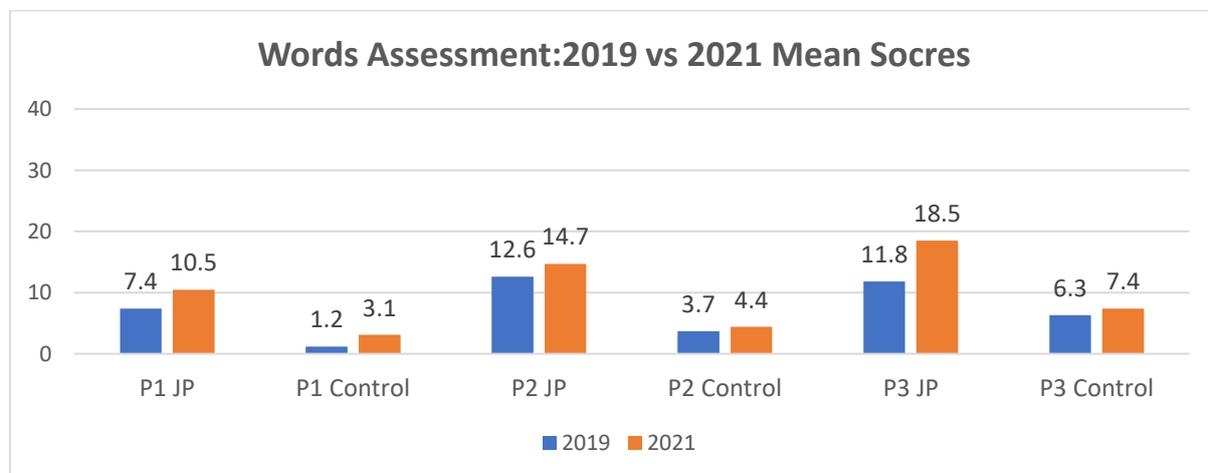


Figure 4 - Comparison of Word Reading Test Mean Scores 2019 and 2021.



Despite the challenges of 2020 and long absences from schools, Jolly Phonics pupils' phonics skills have continued to improve. In the letter sounds test only Primary 3 pupils showed improvements in the mean scores, but in the word reading assessments the mean scores for all year groups were higher in 2021 than 2019. The results suggest that pupils have not learned more letter sounds but they have retained and improved the skill of blending that is needed to read words. The improvements in control school scores from one year to the next are marginal, with Primary 3 control pupils scoring less than the average Primary 1 Jolly Phonics pupil.

ULS Assessment Target Attainment

For the Phonics Screening Exercise, Universal Learning Solutions have set target scores for both the Letter Sounds Test and Word Reading Test for Primary 1 to Primary 3 pupils. The target scores for the two tests are derived from the pass mark set by the UK Department for Education for the Phonics Screening Check. In England, the phonics check is taken by all year 1 pupils and is taken again in year 2 by those pupils who did not pass. In the Nigerian context, pupils should be able to reach the target score after completing two years of Jolly Phonics instruction at the end of Primary 2. The same target score is used in Primary 3 as the children who failed should be able to surpass the target score after additional phonics teaching.

Tables 2 and 3 below show the target scores for each year group in the Letter Sounds Test and the percentage of pupils who achieved them in 2019 and 2021.

Table 2 – 2019 Letter Sounds Test Target Attainment

Year Group	Target Score	% in 21-30 bracket	% in 31-41 bracket	% Achieving Target
P1	20	22.1%	22.4%	44.5%
P2	30	N/A	33.8%	33.8%
P3	30	N/A	32.4%	32.4%

Table 3 – 2021 Letter Sounds Test Target Attainment

Year Group	Target Score	% in 21-30 bracket	% in 31-41 bracket	% Achieving Target
P1	20	27.5%	27.3%	54.8%
P2	30	N/A	41.5%	41.5%
P3	30	N/A	50.4	50.4%

In 2021, 10.3% more Primary 1 pupils were able to identify 20 letter sounds or more than in 2019, meaning that over half of all Primary 1 Jolly Phonics pupils were achieving the target score. 41.5% of Primary 2 Jolly Phonics pupils in 2021 were scoring 30 or above to obtain the target score, which again was an improvement from 2019. The biggest increase in percentage of pupils attaining the target score was in Primary 3 with an increase of 18%. However, 50% of P3 children still do not know more than 30 letter sounds.

Tables 4 and 5 below show the target scores for each year group in the Word Reading Test and the percentage of pupils who achieved them in 2019 and 2021.

Table 4 – 2019 Word Reading Test Target Attainment

Year Group	Target Score	% in 20-29 bracket	% in 30-40 bracket	% Achieving Target
P1	20	12.1%	8.8%	20.9%
P2	30	N/A	17.7%	17.7%
P3	30	N/A	21.1%	21.1%

Table 5 – 2021 Word Reading Test Target Attainment

Year Group	Target Score	% in 20-29 bracket	% in 30-40 bracket	% Achieving Target
P1	20	15.3%	14.1%	29.4%
P2	30	N/A	24.4%	24.4%
P3	30	N/A	34.1%	34.1%

Similar to the Letter Sounds Test, the percentage of pupils achieving the target scores in all groups increased from 2019 to 2021. The most noticeable increases were again in Primary 1 with 15.3% and Primary 3 with 13% more pupils obtaining the target score.

It is worthy of note that for the first time in 2021, ULS trained Primary 3 teachers in nearly all states as part of the Jolly Phonics project. This may explain why in 2019 there was not much difference in the percentages between Primary 2 and Primary 3 pupils, whereas in 2021 there were almost 10% more pupils achieving the target scores in both tests in Primary 3 than in Primary 2.

It is encouraging to see that the percentage of pupils across Nigeria achieving the target scores in all year groups has increased significantly from 2019 to 2021, despite the challenges faced with school closures in 2020. At the same time, it is evident that there is a need to focus on developing pupils' blending skills as we see that the Word Reading Test scores for pupils are lower than their Sounds Assessments scores; while pupils may know certain sounds, they are sometimes unable to blend them together to read whole words. Our goal is for all children to obtain the target scores to be able to read with confidence.

Hausa Phonics Assessment Results

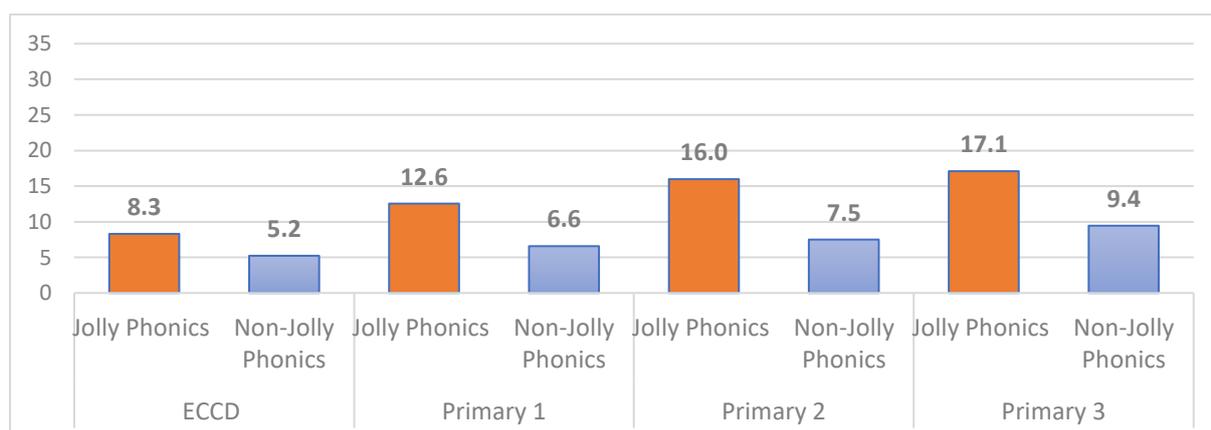
This report will now present the key findings of the data collected during the Phonics Screening Exercise for the Hausa Phonics Assessments. As part of the 2021 Phonics Screening exercise, in states where Hausa is the language of the environment, pupils were also given a Hausa Phonics Assessment for both letter sounds and words. The Letter Sounds Test assesses pupils' knowledge of the 35 phonemes in the Hausa language. As with the English test, the Hausa word assessment is composed of 40 words, containing both made-up decodable words, such as "sazi", and common decodable Hausa words, such as "gyada".

Data was collected in fourteen states in the north of Nigeria to see what impact Jolly Phonics classes had on pupils Hausa literacy skills. The results have proven to be very interesting and will surely generate much debate. The data was taken from the Jolly Monitor Dashboard and has been used to generate the following charts and tables for a detailed analysis of the results. The national mean scores from the Letter Sounds Test are presented first, followed by the Word Reading Test. Finally, the disaggregation of the data will explore the impact of student and teacher variables on the mean scores for each year group.

Letter Sounds Test

Looking at the mean scores for each year group in figure 12 below, it is clear that Jolly Phonics pupils from ECCD to Primary 3 significantly outperformed their non-Jolly Phonics peers in the Hausa Letter Sounds Test.

Figure 5 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Hausa Letter Sounds Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils



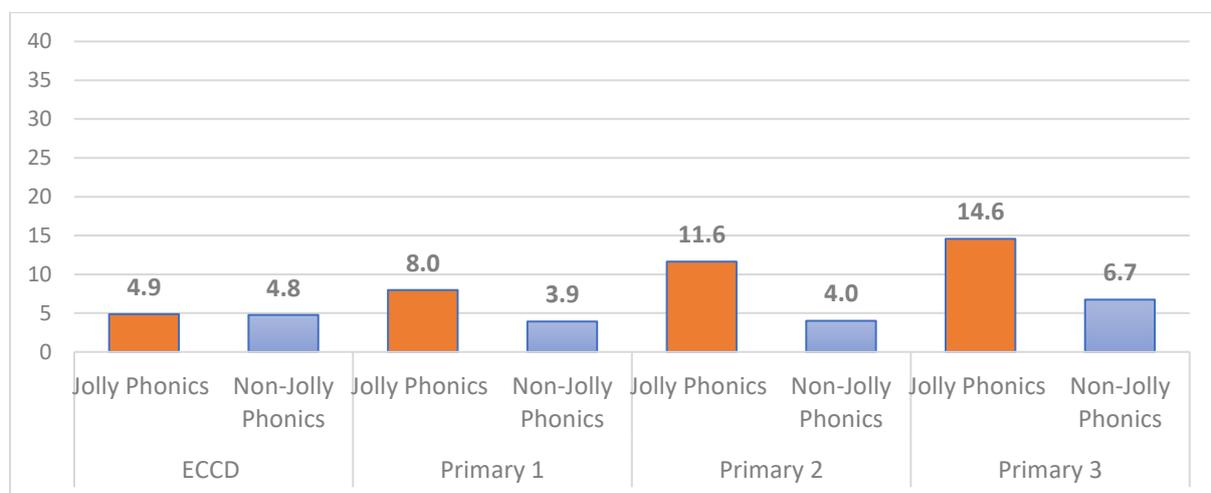
Pupils from ECCD to Primary 3 who have been taught with Jolly Phonics were able to identify considerably more sounds than their peers in control schools. It is clear that Jolly Phonics is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to learn the Hausa letter sounds, as we see pupils making progress from year to year. In contrast, non-Jolly Phonics pupils appear to make less

progress in their sounds' knowledge across the years, with pupils only able to identify between 1 and 2 more sounds each year.

Word Reading Test

The below bar chart (figure 13) compares the Hausa Word Reading Test national mean scores for each year group, ECCD to Primary 3, for both Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics pupils. Primary 1 to Primary 3 Jolly Phonics pupils are again scoring much higher than those pupils not taught with Jolly Phonics.

Figure 6 - Comparison of Mean Scores on Hausa Word Reading Test for Non-Jolly Phonics and Jolly Phonics Pupils



As with the English tests, we see clear progression across all four year groups from year to year among Jolly Phonics taught pupils. They are clearly developing their blending and decoding skills, which are transferable to the Hausa language.

Jolly Phonics taught pupils scored significantly higher than non-Jolly Phonics pupils who displayed poor blending skills; non-Jolly Phonics Primary 3 pupils were unable to identify as many sounds as Jolly Phonics Primary 1 pupils.

These results suggest that Jolly Phonics simultaneously improves literacy skills in both English and Hausa. This is in line with previous research² which suggests that teaching pupils Jolly Phonics not only improved their English literacy skills but also improved their acquisition of mother tongue literacy skills.

Please refer to appendix B For a comparison of mean scores from each state in the Hausa Letter Sound and Word Reading Tests.

² Gittins, L. and Foxcroft, N. 2020. *A case for investing in improving English language literacy teaching in the early grades in Nigeria*. A report by Universal Learning Solutions

Discussion of Results

Overall, the Phonics Screening results in both languages show that pupils taught with Jolly Phonics are making significantly faster progress in their literacy development than their peers who have not received the Jolly Phonics programme. The results confirm that Jolly Phonics continues to be the most effective way to radically transform children’s literacy levels across the country and that there is a need to continue to scale up the programme to reach all children. Despite the fact that UBEC has invested significantly in the Jolly Phonics programme, millions of pupils are still not taught with this transformational method.

As highlighted above, letter sound knowledge and the ability to blend sounds together to read words are key initial literacy skills that provide the foundation for the development of further literacy skills, such as fluency and reading comprehension. This Phonics Screening Exercise has therefore demonstrated that Primary 1, 2, and 3 pupils taught with Jolly Phonics are much more likely than pupils not taught with Jolly Phonics to have successfully started their reading development journey and reached stage 1: decoding.

Despite the challenges of 2020, with schools being closed for long periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Jolly Phonics pupils’ literacy levels have continued to improve significantly. After each year of instruction, clear gains are being made by Jolly Phonics pupils with significant improvements in literacy skills year on year. There were significant improvements in the percentage of pupils achieving the ULS target scores in 2021 compared to 2019. Jolly Phonics pupils scored significantly higher than non-Jolly Phonics pupils who displayed poor phonics skills, even at Primary 3 level. While Jolly Phonics pupils still scored higher than non-Jolly Phonics pupils, the scores show a need for further instruction and practice of blending. Jolly Phonics pupils from ECCD to Primary 3 also outperformed their non-Jolly Phonics peers in the Hausa assessments. This suggests that Jolly Phonics simultaneously improves literacy skills in both English and Hausa.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the Phonics Screening exercise, as well as the data collected through monitoring school visits, Universal Learning Solutions has the following recommendations for all parties involved in the project:

- UBEC should continue to support Jolly Phonics projects in all 36 states and FCT through the next round of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) funding. Projects should be scaled up to train more teachers, but equally important is the need to continue effective monitoring and mentoring of existing Jolly Phonics teachers.
- Project proposals in focus states for The Better Education Service Delivery for All (BESDA) intervention should be approved and implemented as soon as possible. BESDA offers a unique opportunity to dramatically scale up existing Jolly Phonics projects and to continue to radically transform children's literacy in focus states.
- Given the clear impact on children's literacy skills, Universal Learning Solutions should continue to work with the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to imbed the systematic synthetic phonics approach into the Nigerian curriculum.
- UBEC and SUBEBs should consider the procurement of further pupil books for this and the upcoming academic year. This is to ensure that trained teachers can carry on teaching Jolly Phonics effectively and teach more children to read and write.
- ULS and the state project teams will redouble efforts on teaching and supporting blending activities to bridge the gap between scores on the letter sound and word reading tests.



Appendix A - English Mean Score Comparisons by State

Figure 7 – Comparison ECCD Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State

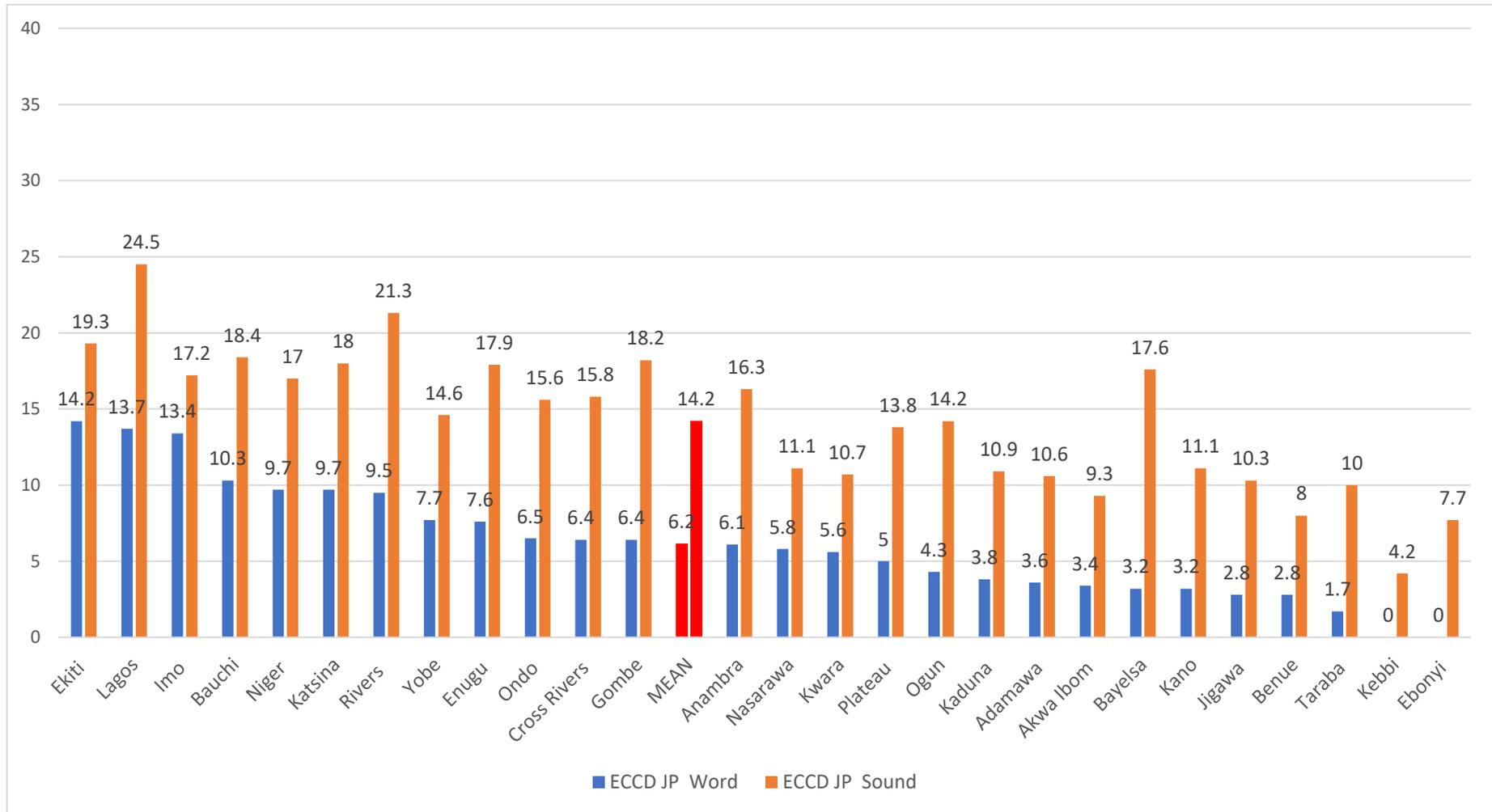


Figure 8 – Comparison Primary 1 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State

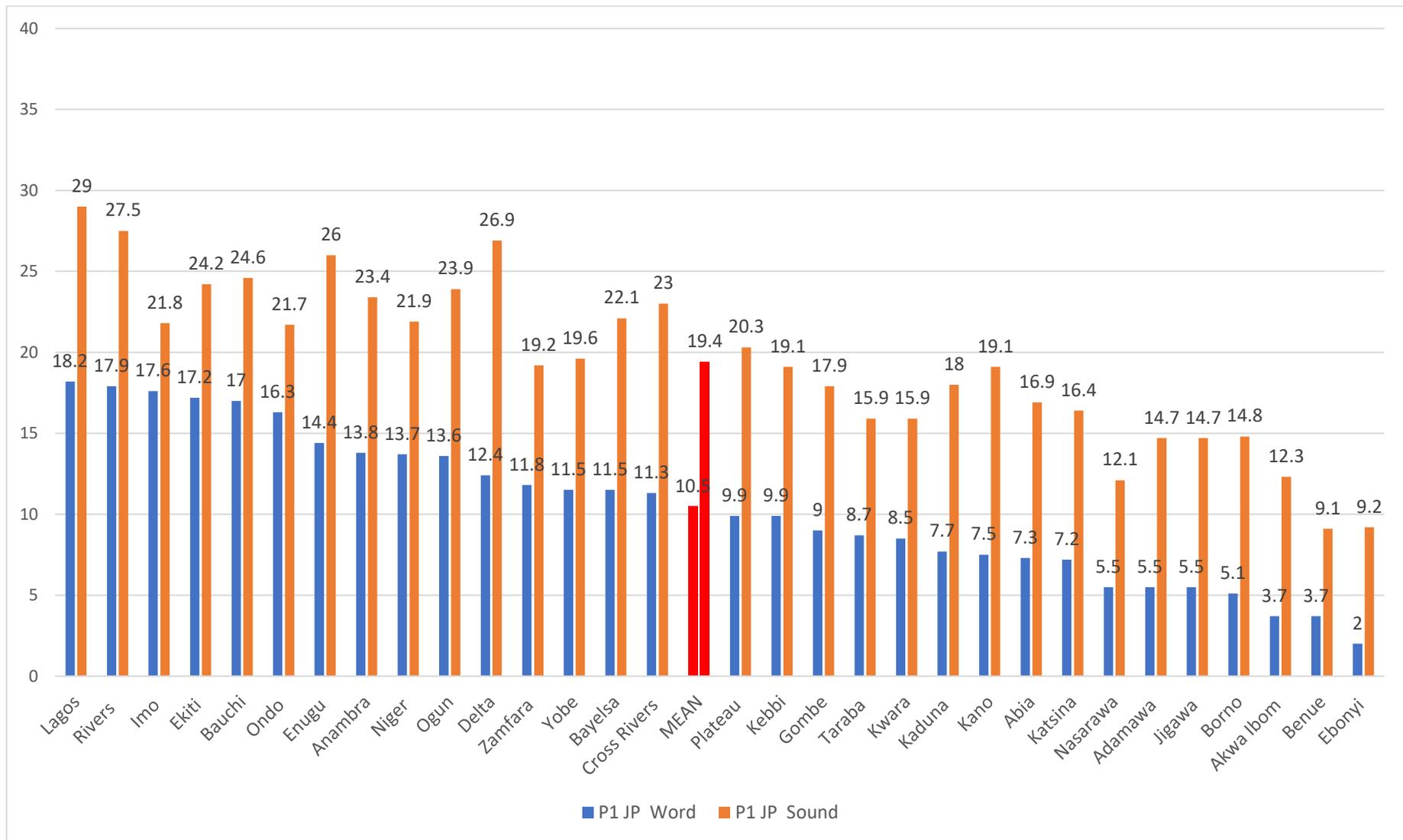


Figure 9 – Comparison Primary 2 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State

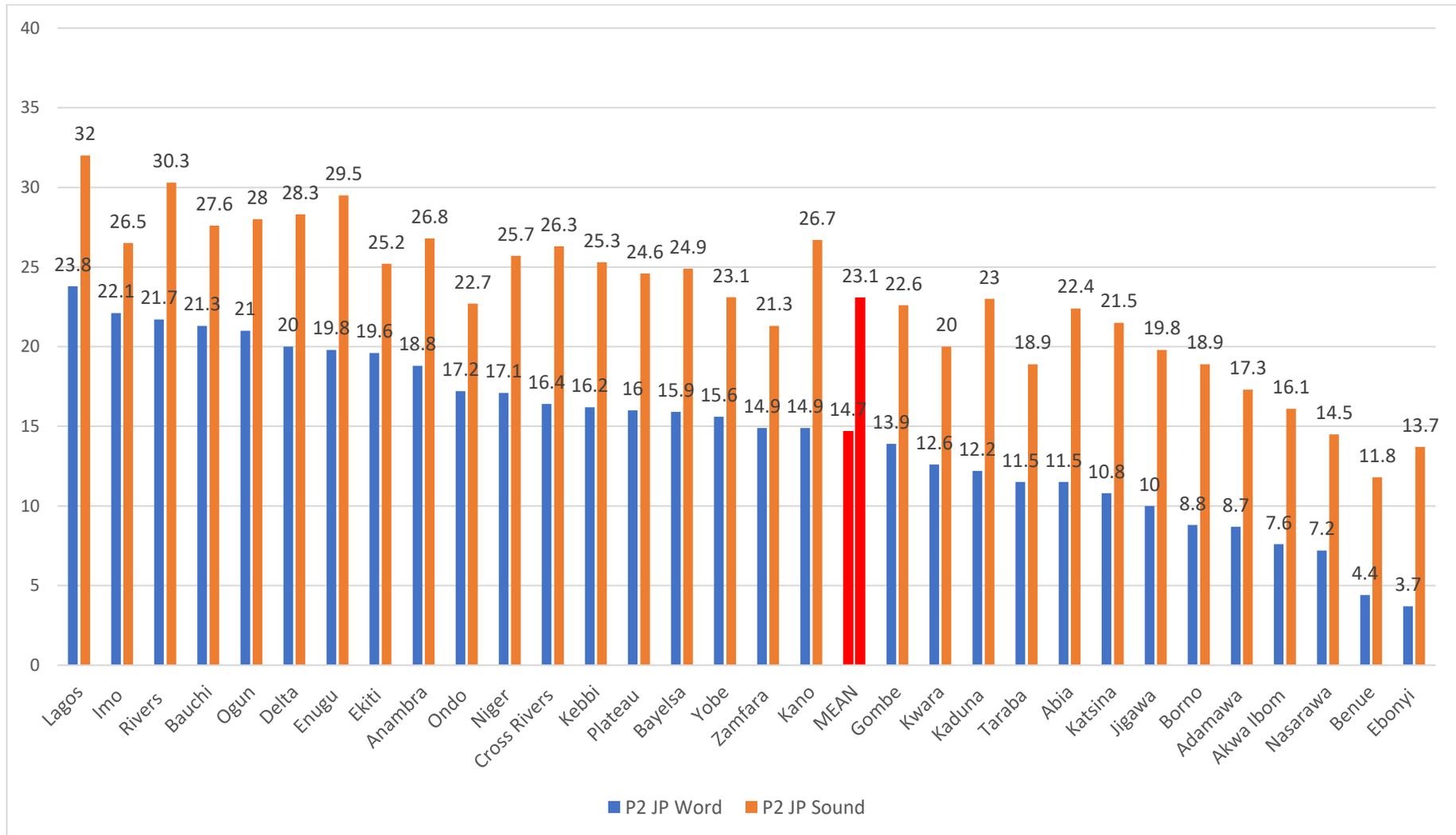
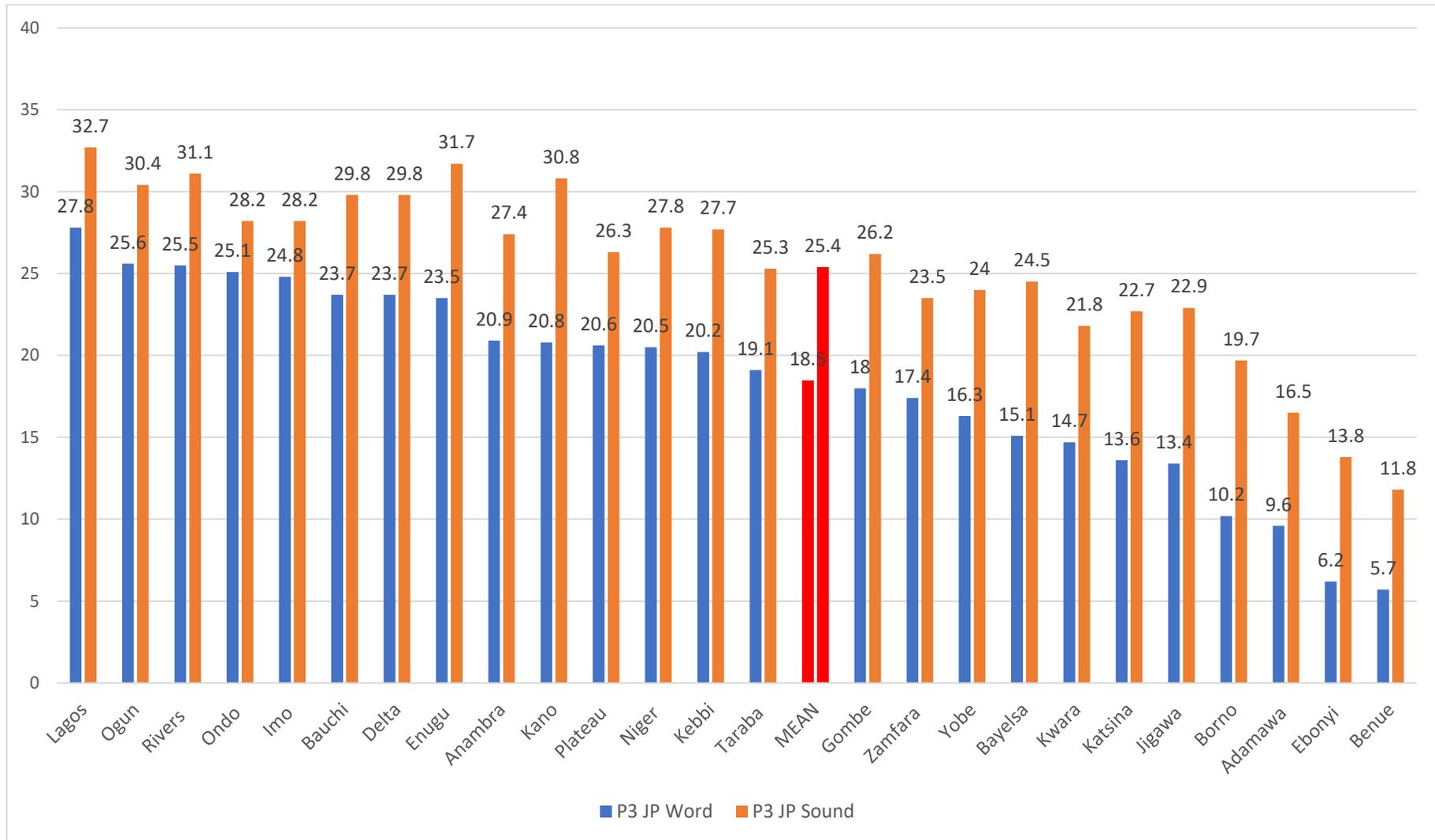


Figure 10 – Comparison Primary 3 Jolly Phonics Mean Scores by State



Appendix B – Hausa Mean Score Comparisons by State

Figure 11 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 1 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

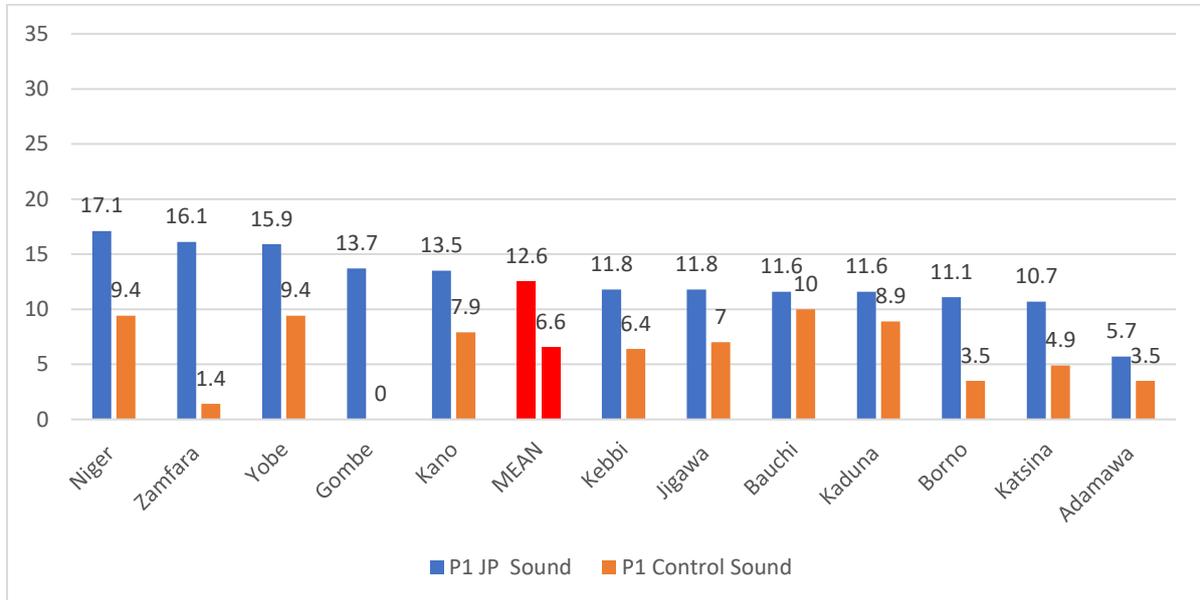


Figure 12 - Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 1 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

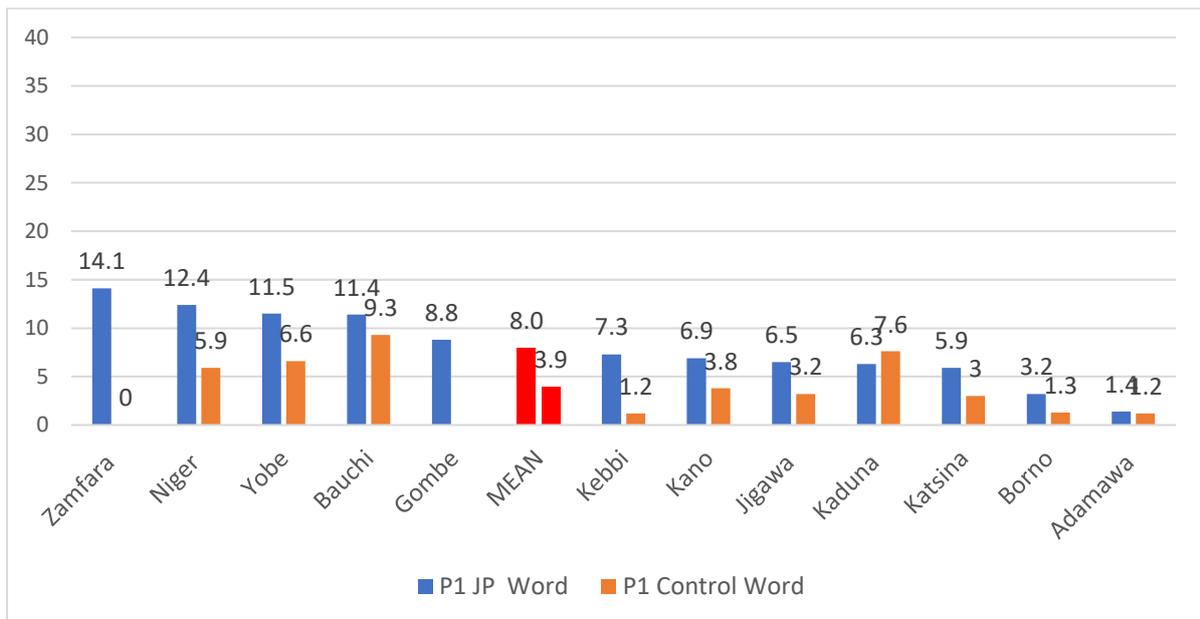


Figure 13 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 2 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

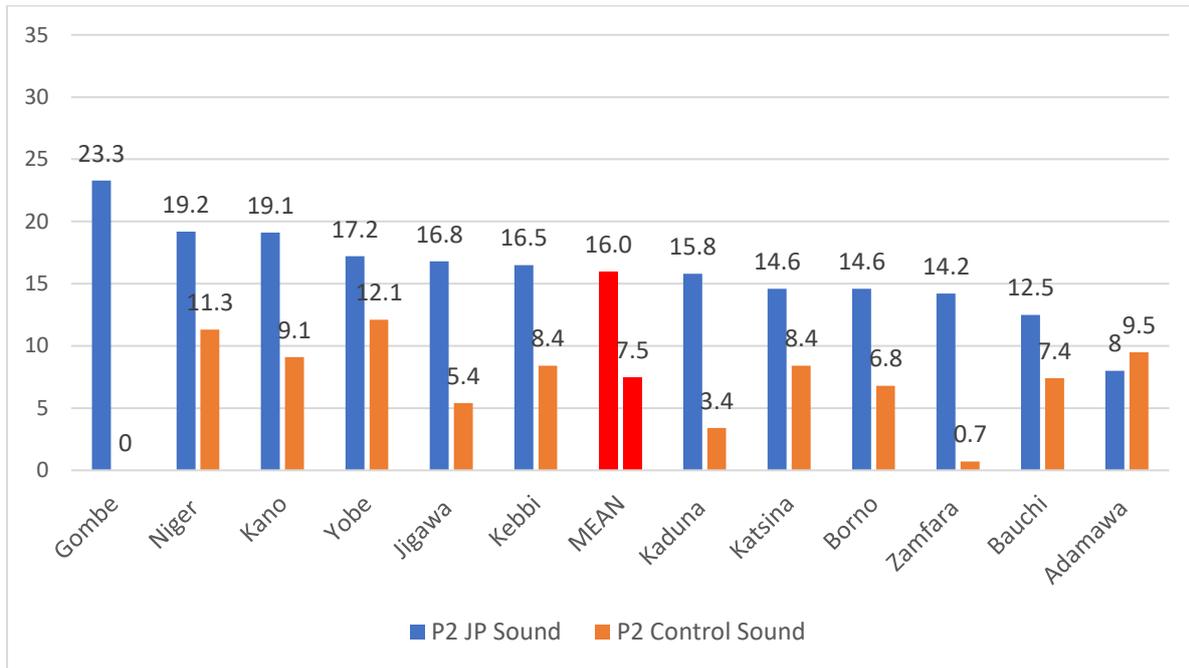


Figure 14- Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 2 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

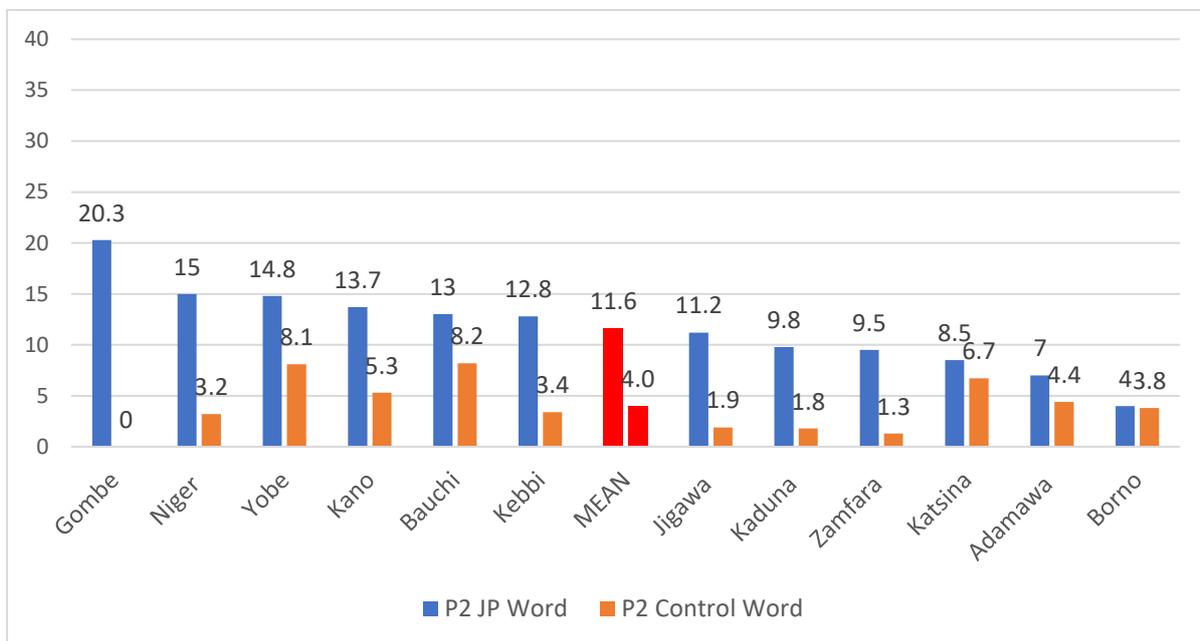


Figure 15 - Hausa Letter Sounds Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 3 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

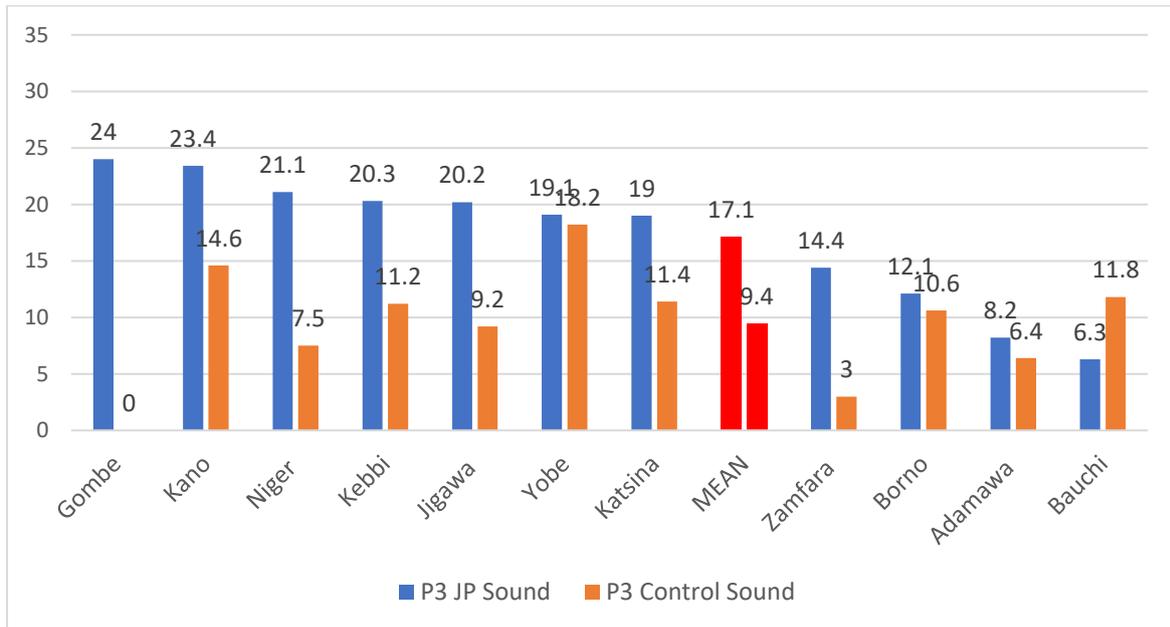


Figure 16 - Hausa Word Reading Test Mean Score Comparison of Primary 3 Jolly Phonics and Non-Jolly Phonics Pupils

