

Radio in Schools Foreword

“Discussion of reading, writing and numeracy in primary education often fails to recognise the central importance of developing children’s spoken communication. Due attention must be given to the prime skills of speaking and listening as essential in their own right and crucial for learning to read, write, to be numerate and indeed, to be successful in virtually all of the learning children undertake at school and elsewhere.”

The Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum (2008)

Radio in Schools is a pioneering, exciting and dynamic project. From its initial beginnings to the pilot project and launch, RIS has sought to address the fundamental educational issues that affect Literacy teaching in schools today. In the ‘English – Review of Inspection Evidence 2000 – 2005’ report, Ofsted states:

“Too little attention has been given to teaching the full National Curriculum programme of study for speaking and listening and the range of contexts provided for speaking and listening remains too limited ...pupils have only limited opportunities for productive speaking and listening.”

Radio in Schools’ prime aim is to improve the speaking and listening skills of young people across the age ranges through the innovative use of radio and ICT. Radio is the perfect vehicle for developing talk, for the careful consideration of composition, vocabulary choice and for encouraging the reflection on audience and purpose.

Both Primary and Secondary National Strategies have stressed the significance of Speaking and Listening in developing literacy skills. For example, ‘Talk for Writing’ is an important element of the Primary Strategy National Continuing Professional Development Programme for teachers. ‘Talk for Writing’ highlights the need to use talk at all stages of the writing process including using talk to help children capture and rehearse their ideas. Radio in Schools supports this ‘talk development’ offering opportunities to use talk as part of the writing process, but also as an end in itself.

The development of ‘Functional Skills in English’ requires engagement in ‘real-life’ situations by students. RiS provides opportunities to both take part in, and develop critical awareness of a range of these, as well as, of course, directly supporting progress in GCSE speaking and listening activities.

As part of this focus and with a commitment to supporting teachers in the classroom, Radio in Schools, alongside pilot schools, has developed a detailed speaking and listening assessment framework that supports teachers in both assessing speaking and listening but also in planning for next steps for pupils. Talk is ‘at the heart of the educational process.’ (Cazden, 1998)

Radio in Schools enables children to explore their own areas of interest and provide them with a platform for the discussion of current concerns. We know that valuing children's talk in this way supports children's abilities to develop an understanding of the world they live in and the events in that world, (Cazden) and so Radio in Schools has the potential to support both Citizenship and the PHSE curriculum.

Pupil motivation and engagement is a key factor in pupil learning. (Stoll et al 2003). Radio in Schools, through its simple but realistic use of the Virtual Studio, website and accompanying equipment, provides this motivation for pupils. Children have a desire to test out the different effects they can create, to edit and polish each podcast to ensure they have the most effective, attention grabbing podcast in the class. This level of engagement is hard to find and the outcomes have exceeded many class teacher's expectations.

The interim Primary Review (2008) and Excellence and Enjoyment (2003) both reinforce the need for children to use and apply literacy learning across the curriculum. The need for discreet and integrated teaching of subjects has been highlighted. Radio in Schools has been used for both the traditional English lesson and for cross curricular studies. It provides a unique approach to learning and teaching that utilises its multimodal nature across the curriculum.

Meeting the demands of the curriculum through challenging, relevant and engaging means is at the heart of the design and use of Radio in Schools. However, what is clear is that it also provides not a constraining blue print of the way forward but a flexible tool that allows the teacher and learner to explore their own creativity through its use.

Jane Carter, Senior Lecturer in Primary Education, University of the West of England, January 2009

Radio in Schools Pilot Phase September – December 2008
Evaluation Report
December 2008



'Radio in Schools was the perfect opportunity to excite our reluctant readers and writers and a perfect vehicle for us to raise levels of attainment for those children. The possibilities are as limitless as our imagination.'

Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill School, St. George, Bristol.

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Project Introduction

Radio in Schools (RiS) is an easy to use national podcasting platform that promotes speaking, listening and creativity across the curriculum, and is supported by the radio industry.

Creating and Sharing Podcasts Online

RiS allows schools, pupils, teachers and young people to easily create podcasts and share content with their whole community. Podcasts are produced with the easy to use Virtual Studio, which is accessible anytime, on a computer wherever there is an internet connection. It's a really simple process with no need to download and install software and provides unlimited space for users to store files.

Promoting Speaking, Listening and Creativity

RiS addresses personalised learning in a new and innovative way, helping to develop the individual student voice. It provides learning activities directly linked to the National Curriculum and beyond, with all primary and secondary resources produced by educational and radio experts. It gives children, young people, teachers and schools ownership and control of their own work, and offers a platform to showcase content. It can also support ICT and teacher training.

Links with the Radio Industry

Radio in Schools is supported by Global Radio - the UK's largest radio network including Heart, Classic FM and Galaxy. Every part of the Radio in Schools process has been developed in close consultation with radio experts, and offers professional resources, audio templates, lesson guides, information and advice. Radio in Schools also fosters close links with local radio stations.

Innovation

Radio in Schools will make full use of developing technologies such as iPod/iPhone integration, managed learning systems and dynamic internet and PDA applications. Partnerships with Global Radio, Local Authorities and other networks will provide potential for information sharing and collaboration.

Radio in Schools is a not for profit organisation and will launch across Bristol on January 5th 2009. A national launch is planned for late February 2009.

Pilot Phase Introduction

Aims and Objectives of Radio in Schools Pilot

One aim of the pilot was to test functionality, design, safety and security of the Radio in Schools portal and to see if RiS could be run solely through an online podcasting platform (a worldwide first). The site needed to be easily navigable for both children and teachers; design had to be bold, bright, engaging and fun. The second aim was to explore the impact that RiS might have on levels of attainment and engagement, through piloting RiS in the following partner schools. The pilot period was short at 10 weeks, which allowed schools to try out only a small range of activities, but gave them enough time to comment on its functionality and value as an educational tool."

Two Mile Hill Infants School, The Kingsway, Kingswood, Bristol

Radio in Schools Rep: Head teacher – Jill Marsh

8 children used Radio in Schools (RiS) a total of 4 times for one hour each session during the pilot

Burnbush Primary School, Whittock Road, Stockwood, Bristol

Radio in Schools Rep: Literacy Coordinator: Heather Morris and supported by Head teacher Cat Dempsey

120 children used RiS a total of 10 times for one hour each session during the pilot

St Johns Primary School, Worrall Road, Clifton, Bristol

Radio in Schools Rep: Literacy Coordinator, Nicky Roberts and supported by Headteacher Justin Hoyer

120 children used RiS a total of 3 times for one hour each session during the pilot

Bristol Metropolitan College, Snowdon Road, Fishponds, Bristol. BS16

Radio in Schools Rep: Lis Jolley

Total of 50 children used RiS for one double period each during the pilot

Cotham Secondary School, Cotham Lawn Road, Cotham, Bristol. BS6

Radio in Schools Rep: Head of English – Nicola Clayton Jones

Total of 100 children used RiS 4 times in the following ways:

- Two year 9 groups interviewing
- Year 7 group – to support class reader ('Private Peaceful')
- Year 10 group for Speaking and Listening assessment (GCSE)

Henbury School, Station Road, Henbury, Bristol

Radio in Schools Rep: Head of ICT and Business – Tanya Wright. Also supported by Headteacher Clare Bradford

Total of 10 children used RiS a total of 4 times for one hour each session during the pilot in an after school Radio Club on a Tuesday afternoon.

Summary of the Pilot Phase

The pilot began late September 2008, through meetings between Radio in Schools Director, Melissa Thom and all the schools involved, and finished on Dec 19th 2008. It consisted of the following:

Sept – Melissa visited all pilot schools to introduce them to the pilot

Oct – Radio in Schools Pilot began in classes

Nov – Melissa visited classes to monitor pupil sessions, distribute the questionnaire to pupils and speak to teachers

Dec – Independent Assessment carried out by educational consultant Bryan Webster (ex-Head of English, Special Needs and Performing Arts Faculty in a large comprehensive school, Lecturer in Secondary Education at Bath University, and Local Authority adviser) in pilot schools and final teacher questionnaires collated by Melissa

Throughout the pilot, Melissa worked with a number of educationalists including Jane Carter – Primary Lecturer at UWE, Professor Saville Kushner – Head of Research, Education Dept, UWE, Ayleen Driver – Head of ICT Strategy and Development, Bristol City Council and Linda Brown – Director, Brislington CLC.

During the pilot phase over 400 young people have used Radio in Schools, in schools that represent a diverse cross section of the local community.

Report Introduction

The main aim of the pilot phase of RiS was to explore its usefulness as a tool for stimulating and facilitating learning activities that address some or all of the key areas of learning for Speaking and Listening, as outlined in the National Curriculum. (These Details are included in the appendix, in the 'background document'.) The usability of the resource has also been a central consideration.

In order to explore the usability and the potential value of 'Radio in Schools', a process of evaluation was devised and embedded into the delivery of the pilot phase. This process focused on initiating exchange and gathering feedback from those involved in the programme, primarily students and teachers in the schools where the pilot phase was delivered.

Questionnaires were circulated to all involved and a significant amount of feedback had also been gathered through focus groups, meetings, visits, telephone interviews

and radio interviews (with audio collated as podcasts) from each of the participating schools. This evidence is contained in its totality in the CD appendix.

Teachers were asked to consider what it is that they were able to do, given the RiS website and resources. This enabled a clear overview of the range of activities undertaken in pilot. Teachers were also asked to consider how it has helped pupils make progress in terms of speaking and listening criteria.

The evidence collated from teachers thereby enabled the identification of the frequency of use of RiS, as well as the range of activities teachers devised, and how it contributed to improving levels of attainment and achievement.

Pupils' levels of engagement was also monitored by teachers to identify any impact the project had for those young people. In some cases, teachers used the Speaking and Listening Grid (contained in the appendix) to identify pupils' levels at the beginning and end of the pilot, in order to ascertain whether they were making some significant progress.

This report has been produced through an analysis of the materials contained in the appendix. Extracts from the appendix materials are cited throughout the report as evidence of the claims made.

This report thereby considers the effectiveness of RiS as a resource in educational contexts and identifies ways forward for the project. However, as the process of evaluation has been effectively embedded into the project process, a great deal of learning has taken place along the way, which has informed project development. This responsive and reflective approach and the ways in which it has influenced the detail of the project are also clarified in this report.

This report is therefore structured initially around the aims of the pilot, with section 1 being concerned with the usability of the resource, section 2 with the value and impact on learning and attainment, and section 3 considering the ongoing evaluative development of the project. Following the main sections of the report, a concluding chapter proposes recommendations for further developments as well as summarising the successes of the work. Prior to the main sections of the report is an executive summary that aims to highlight the main points, and which can be used as a stand alone document to articulate the aims and outcomes of the project.

Executive Summary

Radio in Schools (RiS) is a simple tool that offers schools, teachers and pupils a safe platform to showcase their work, space to store files and strong links to the professional radio industry. In a worldwide first, it allows them to create audio online through the easy to use Virtual Studio; there is no need to download and install software and no technical knowledge is required. The initiative is aimed at infants, primary and secondary schools across the UK, colleges, universities and youth organisations. It provides a whole host of educational and radio resources, as well as useful tips from some of the most respected radio presenters in the country. Competitions and visits to schools and local radio stations are all planned for the next school year.

The pilot phase has sought to explore the usability and the impact of RiS in school contexts across Bristol. The feedback that has been gathered suggests that the pilot phase has proven both the usability and the effectiveness of RiS as a resource for literacy in school contexts:

“My name is Ollie Coterell and I go to St John's school. I think it (Radio in Schools) is really cool and a great experience to get confidence; it's just really good and modern. I like the fact you can hear your voices when you play them back. It's a really cool microphone I have to admit, quite funky.”

Furthermore, feedback indicates that RiS lends a focus and purpose to the production of work that has positive impact on students' attainment through raising their self expectations and therefore their confidence, as is indicated in the quotes below, which are indicative of the feedback gathered:

“Speaking and listening is the foundation of literacy but is too often overlooked. This is despite studies showing that speaking and listening is the literacy skill most used in the world of work. Without vital literacy skills, children's opportunities will be limited throughout adult life. Projects like Radio in Schools could help more children to gain the skills they need to fulfill their potential.” (Fiona Lewis, Head of Communications, the National Literacy Trust)

“The main impact I think it has is giving the children a reason for writing, it also requires them to think about how their writing sounds when read aloud and how it is much easier to write lots and much more difficult to have to summarise their work which is a great skill to gain. As far as speaking and listening is concerned it gives even the least able speaker the enthusiasm to speak out loud as they are so excited about the process and the thought of

being on the 'radio'. Not one child refused to do this, which was very encouraging." Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

The public nature of podcasting means that young people are engaged in producing something 'real' that is for an audience:

"(RiS) Gives purpose for working." (Jill Marsh, Head Teacher Two Mile Hill Infants)

This notion of a real audience nurtures a sense of pride in one's work and a self-motivated process of refining one's work is almost inevitable. It is this self motivated process of returning to work to improve it that teachers have highlighted as being central to the success of the project and the impact that it has had:

"Radio in Schools is a really useful tool because it gives the children a real reason to go back to a piece of writing and keep editing and improving it. The website and the Virtual Studio are simplicity itself, and the children really do feel like they are working in radio. Having a safe platform to showcase the children's work is fantastic. Radio in Schools is a key tool in raising standards in reading and writing, and if this doesn't help us to raise standards with some of our boys, I don't know what will". (Jill Marsh, Head Teacher Two Mile Hill Infants)

As indicated in the quote above, teachers have also highlighted the value of RiS in its potential to engage in an inclusive way. RiS is therefore a flexible tool that engages and inspires young people, with different abilities, interests and needs, to improve their own work across any curriculum area or focus.

There is therefore great potential for RiS to be used effectively and meaningfully across a range of subjects and schools, nationally, and with a range of partners:

"Radio in Schools is a wonderful way of children presenting and conveying what they've done within any aspect of work, without having to write something down. Everybody is very excited, all the children know about it, most of the staff are using it now and the children just see it as another way of presenting their work instead of having to write it all of the time." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

1 The Usability of RiS

1.1 How easy is it to use?

All schools reported that RiS was very easy to use:

"No restrictions. Older teachers, less familiar with IT, are fine with it." Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

"The website and the Virtual Studio are simplicity itself I'm not exactly a spring chicken to the profession. And If I can use it then I believe that any one can use it, In fact I believe that with a few more sessions our children would be able to use the studio on their own with very little adult input, given that these children are only 6 and 7 years old. This is so simple and the children really do feel like they are working in radio, In fact they asked me this morning, would we hear their voice on GWR, so absolutely realistic to us and to the children." Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

"I think the website's fantastic. The children find it very easy to use – they can all follow it. It's very simple just to push a button and record it and drag things. It's brilliant to use." Heather Morris: Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School.

"Students have really enjoyed using the Virtual Studio because it's so easy. I only had to give them a very quick demonstration and they enjoyed the fact that they can get on with it by themselves." Tanya Wright, Head of ICT & Business, Henbury School.

"No problems have been reported – everyone seems to have been comfortable using it. The system has been presented to all at a staff meeting and was recognised as very easy to use." Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

Furthermore, pupils enjoyed using RiS, as will be expanded upon in the 'engagement' section of this report. Pupil questionnaires showed the following responses regarding RiS:

Of 76 pupils:

47 Really liked it

17 Quite liked it

11 said okay

1.2 Design considerations

The attention to detail regarding design considerations such as the microphone, have encouraged engagement. What is also significant is how the 'professional' quality of the website and other resources, such as the microphone, lead young

people to take the work seriously, impacting positively on the aspirations they have for their own work:

“It felt really professional.” Student at St. John's Primary school

“They all really liked the microphone being called and shaped like a snowball. One girl said it made her feel happy and special. It made her want to add more detail to her writing and made her quicker to get her work finished.” Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.



“Pupils ‘love’ the microphone. This has created quite an incentive – using it is seen as a reward.” Heather Morris: Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School.

“I loved Radio in Schools because it gave us a chance to feel like the professionals and to use high-tech stuff like the microphone”. Ella Bracey, Pupil, St.Johns Primary school.

1.3 How it has been used

Teachers have used RiS for a variety of reasons and in many different ways, utilising the flexibility of RiS as a tool and resource:

“We have read a poem, edited and improved work begun in class and then recorded the outcomes. Children have also been involved in evaluating audio clips

and then selecting those to be added to the project” Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

“Children produced Postcards written to their parents about their experience of WW2 and evacuation. They then made these postcards into podcasts.¹” Heather Morris: Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School.

“We looked at what a podcast was, they learned to use the Virtual Studio then did a session on planning their podcast where they had to write a script and decide on what special effects they wanted and then next week they’re going to be recording their own podcast and reviewing and editing it.” Tanya Wright, Head of ICT and Business, Henbury School

“Students in year 7 and 9 have had a workshop session on radio. Year 7 focused on advertising and year 9 on sections of a radio show such as weather, sport and opinions/debate.” Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan college.

“So far we have used RIS as part of our literacy lessons. We use the premade podcasts to teach the children how to write good news report. We used the info given by George and changed it into a step-by-step worksheet. The children then created their own news stories based on local news or things happening in school. They then all recorded their podcasts.” Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

Activities that were podcast

45 pupils podcast a news, weather or sports report

30 pupils podcast interviews

29 pupils podcast music recording

22 pupils podcast a story or a Poem

20 pupils podcast advertisements

13 pupils podcast Discussions

13 pupils podcast Speeches

Activities teachers found most effective with their pupils

(E.g. formal discussion/debate, readings, interviews, reports)

- Capturing audio – children reading or being interviewed.
- Focus on reading aloud for an audience and evaluating effectiveness.
- Developing reading/speaking skills.
- Listening to others.
- Advertising – creating small radio adverts.
- Developing collaborative skills in group-work.
- Persuasive speeches (GCSE assessment) – students were able to focus on their tone/pronunciation etc. RiS seen as a very useful tool – better than simple recording because of the studio – allowing very easy search and replay, and to redraft sections, just like one would with a writing task.

¹ Examples are contained in the appendix.

- Interviews went well – the system encouraged peer assessment and supports developing an awareness of interview techniques.
- Class reader: used for focusing on incidents (in role of characters in the text). This provided a different and interesting 'angle' on the reading, which is intended to develop further (hot-seating of characters, reports on incidents for news broadcasts, literary analysis of text etc)

1.4 Usefulness of additional resources

For pilot, only a skeleton pack of sfx and resources were included. A full package has now been uploaded for launch, including many more jingles, tracks and sfx now available.

Teachers all found the RiS resources useful, for example: "Grids are very useful for assessment" Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan College.

Pupils responded in the following ways regarding the resources that are part of the RiS website:

49 liked the **Recording studio** very much, 18 liked a bit, 10 didn't mind

51 liked the **Microphone** very much, 13 liked a bit, 3 didn't mind, 7 didn't like, 4 hated

36 liked the **GWR jingles** very much, 10 liked, 20 liked a bit, 8 didn't mind, 2 didn't like

39 liked the **Music and other sfx** very much, 10 liked, 14 liked a bit, 13 didn't mind either way

1.5 Teachers' plans for the future uses of RiS

The evidence collected and contained in the appendix documents shows that teachers are keen to utilise RiS in even more ways in the future and are generally excited by its potential:

"I'm constantly saying 'I could do a podcast with that.' Already RiS has become a key tool for teaching." Heather Morris: Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School.

"To motivate children to speak/write for a variety of purposes. Our future plans include training classroom assistants to use the studio with children as well as encouraging children to use the studio more independently. It will be a valuable tool whereby staff will enable children to develop collaborative learning skills and to engage in self and peer assessment. Our aim is to eventually allow access to the podcast via our school website." Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

"It has already become another tool for sharing work and an outcome for learning. We intend for this to continue and become a larger part of school activities." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"We would like the older children to use it using PDAs." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Our French assistant will record French songs and conversations before she goes back to Quebec. These will then be used to teach French when the rest of the staff have to do it." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Record newsletters to put in the school website instead of sending out paper copies and for parents who have limited reading skills." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School.

"Radio Club, to produce school radio with outcomes such as assembly presentations, reports presented through the school Tannoy system, etc." Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan College.

"Plan to use in English Scheme of Work, start a Year 7 Radio Club and introduce to other curriculum areas." Nicola Clayton-Jones, Head of English, Cotham, Secondary School.

"BTEC diploma in Media is to be introduced next academic year. This may be a very useful support." Nicola Clayton-Jones, Head of English, Cotham, Secondary School.
"Recorded podcasts about school trips and visits – hopefully as 'outside broadcasts.'" Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

"Parent/school liaison – Newsletter and developing a 'tour of school' as a podcast to go on School's web-site (film/Powerpoint link)." Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

Other staff at St.Johns also identified the following future uses of RiS:

- Minutes of School Council Meetings
- Trailers for plays
- Interviews with parents after plays (or other events)
- Interviews with teachers – 'finding out about ...'
- Play scripts
- Revision bites
- Telling stories
- MFL
- Africa link (recordings to and fro with teacher who has link in Uganda.
- Hot seating in character (for drama, literature or history project work)



Furthermore, teachers have developed their own resources for use in future RiS based work:

“The teachers are devising their own lesson plans. Ideas from the resources are used and, of course, the tracks (jingles etc.)” Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

Tanya Wright at Henbury school has created ‘writing frames’ to help structure radio reports and provide starting phrases for the sections. (Copy included in CD appendix.)

2 The impact of using RiS

2.1 Engagement

RiS clearly engages young people, which is in part, due to the consideration that has been given to the design and detail of the website and resources. It has been shown from feedback that the overwhelming majority of young people enjoys using RiS, and have commented extensively on it as being ‘fun’:

“RiS makes learning fun. If children are having fun they are more likely to engage and levels of attainment will increase at the same time.” Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

“My name’s Linda Dimbololo and I go to Cotham School. I’ve enjoyed the fact that I’ve been able to work with my friends and write scripts. We don’t usually do this in English so it’s really fun. I’ve really enjoyed using the project because it’s a new experience and it’s really fun.”

“An amazing website” – Stuart Edgell, Aged 10

“All children have been engaged.” Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"It's been noticed that boys like the technology – and enjoy the fact that outcomes are not linked to neat written presentation." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Can see benefits for all pupils – it may be particularly valuable for some boys (who lack confidence with writing and don't enjoy written outcomes)." Nicola Clayton-Jones, Head of English, Cotham, Secondary School.

In addition to the above, Tanya Wright at Henbury School found that lower ability (boys in particular) find written preparation for recording difficult and making connections between podcast examples and creating their own ideas. This has been reflected in other comments from teachers at all schools and is of relevance to 'inclusion', as expanded upon later in this report.

The link with GWR has also been highlighted as being of significance to pupils' engagement. The recognition of and familiarity with the radio station means that young people are more inclined to be interested and engaged, as they recognise it as 'real' and 'professional', as well as connecting it to 'celebrity':

"The link with GWR is really useful because it's something that students are interested in. As soon as you mention that there's a real live link with something they've heard of, they're instantly interested in it." Tanya Wright, Head of ICT & Business, Henbury School

"The children love to have the GWR sound bites at the beginning of their own work." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"GWR is a station that a lot of them listen to, so it gives the project kudos and if they think it's going to be on air, it gives it that kind of 'X Factor' excitement." Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan college.

2.2 Impact on Skills

RiS clearly has a positive impact on a wide range of skills, as articulated in the following quote:

"I think the RiS project will help with their ICT skills, because the software is easy to use they instantly feel confident with it and they realise that they can actually create something by using ICT. It helps with their writing skill because they have to write their own podcast. It helps with their reading skills because they're reading back their own words that they've written. They also have to read any comments that I might have made on their work and any suggestions. It helps with their listening skills because they need to listen back to what they're recorded for editing purposes and it helps with their speaking skills because when they listen back, if something's not clear, they understand that they need to re-record it and make sure that they're making sense." Tanya Wright, Head of ICT & Business, Henbury School.



Pupil questionnaires show that the following number of young people (from a total of 77) thought that RiS helped them improve the following skills:

Confidence:	71 / 77
Having a go:	70 / 77
Sharing ideas:	66 / 77
Reading:	61 / 77
Speaking:	60 / 77
Working as a team:	46 / 77

The following numbers of students stated that they thought RiS was helpful for:

Listening to others:	69 / 77
Speaking in different situations:	68 / 77
Listening to yourself:	65 / 77

Confidence

Pupils' and teachers' comments have stressed the impact of using RiS on pupils' confidence, for example:

"I loved using it. It was really fun and it improved my confidence". Zoe Hutchen, Pupil, St.Johns Primary School.

"My name is Florian, I like the Radio in Schools project because it's quite easy to use and it's made me more confident in speaking. I'm recording a podcast on the GWR Radio in Schools website. It's really easy – you just have to login, go into the studio, create a name for your project, then you press on the red recording button, record your voice with the microphone, then once you've recorded what you want, you press on the red recording button again, and then you may edit it as you like."

"I really liked using Radio in Schools because it helped me gain confidence with public speaking". James Swift, Pupil, Cotham School.

"I think it's helped the children with their confidence – they're happier to sit and talk to the rest of the class and the whole speaking and listening – children are much more confident to present their work. It's now become a tool so when you're planning a unit of work and thinking about the outcomes, it's just another outcome that the children could do; you could create a podcast, as well as doing other things with it." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Non-confident writers also are enjoying success with oral outcomes." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Those who dislike writing benefit from success in another medium." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Non-confident speakers – are provided with safe opportunities to try out and build confidence." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"The children love the equipment and are very respectful of it. It has encouraged boys particularly to speak in front of the class and children have grown in confidence from using it. Children are more willing to have a go and will self assess their work by saying they think they can do better and asking for another go at recording their part." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"It is a fantastic piece of software that has adding another dimension to children's learning which allows them to develop their confidence through developing speaking and listening in a purposeful way." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

Literacy

Feedback also indicates that RiS has great potential to impact positively on literacy:

"At Henbury School we are keen to raise the literacy attainment of all students. By being involved in the Radio in Schools pilot we hope to engage students in the exciting process of creating their own podcasts. The podcasts will allow students the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills and by being able to upload student's work we can celebrate their achievements. We're really excited about the project". Tanya Wright, Head of ICT & Business, Henbury School.

Teachers found value in using RiS, especially in terms of the following areas of literacy development:

- Improving quality of reading through speaking and listening. Improving quality of writing through speaking and listening.
- Developing listening skills.
- Develop openness to constructive criticism.
- Writing – speaking link. Quality of writing improves with spoken rehearsal and trying out.
- Self-assessment of effectiveness of writing as well as speaking.
- Benefits particularly those pupils who feel unconfident with written outcomes.
- Confidence-building for those nervous of speaking directly to an audience.
- Speaking and listening both benefit.

- Obliges pupils to listen to each other.
- Provides clear purpose for writing and editing.
- Process of rehearsing speaking from scripts and then, following listening, altering scripts supports developing writing through editing.
- Particularly useful because it allows proper analysis of the speaking activity, and encourages self-assessment.
- Accurate reading and the development of effective reading out loud. In doing so this develops an increased understanding and interpretation of text.

Speaking and Listening

The range of speaking and listening activities that may be engaged with through RiS is huge.

RiS has "opened a whole world of new things to do for Speaking and Listening that are thorough and meaningful" Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"The main skills that it improves are speaking, and they have very few opportunities to speak in a formal environment, so it will help them with any job they want to go for in the future. When they're listening back to their voice, they all seem to think it sounds very, very strange - that it doesn't sound like them, but secretly they seem really proud and they giggle a lot." Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan college.

Learning to Learn

The self-evaluative process that is stimulated through using RiS and which has been commented on by all teachers is such that young people develop self-critical processes that are key to becoming independent learners and 'learning to learn':

"Learning to learn – RiS provides plenty of opportunities for development and assessment of learning skills (working together, perseverance, initiative, etc.)" Lis Jolley, Head of Music, Bristol Metropolitan college.

"Radio in schools will give our young children a reason for revisiting their writing and improving it rather than simply because an adult has suggested it could be better. It will also improve speaking skills." Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

Teachers have stated that the educational benefits of RiS are as follows:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • Developing group work | Yes: 5/6 |
| • Improving listening skills | Yes: 6/6 |
| • Providing range of audiences | Yes: 5/6 |
| • Providing a sense of 'real' purpose | Yes: 6/6 |
| • Encouraging pupil awareness of effective speech | Yes: 6/6 |
| • Support for assessment of s and l | Yes: 6/6 |
| • Other opportunities for subject development: | |
| o Showing of good work such as compositions and performances. | |

2.3 Impact on wider school community

The impact on the schools involved in this pilot has been twofold. Firstly it has stimulated plans for using RiS across the school in cross-curricular and extra curricular ways:

“Radio in Schools can be used across the curriculum. We used it in our history project which is all about WW2 and we have done evacuation. We went on a trip where the children were evacuated, all dressed up in costume – they got lots out of the day. We then came back to school and they wrote a postcard to their parents saying what had happened to them during their evacuation experience and from those postcards, we then recorded those as podcasts.” Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

Staff other than those involved are clearly interested in and aware of the potential of using RiS across the curriculum and beyond, for example in PE, History, Music, assemblies, out of school and enrichment activities and as the stimulus for a Radio club.

Secondly it has had an impact on pupils' skills and (consequently) behaviour; which will be significant in terms of their engagement and attainment across the schools. For example:

“It has given children confidence to speak out loud and reasons for writing. It allows children to have to think about how they speak and what sounds clear and effective; part of our excellence and enjoyment in the curriculum” Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St. Johns Primary School.

“Podcasting has created discipline with the rest of the class – listening to each other, supporting each other etc.” Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

2.4 The contemporary relevance of RiS

It is clear from feedback that RiS is a resource that relates to a variety of contemporary educational approaches and government agendas. Some of the key areas in which the impact of RiS is relevant, are as follows:

Expanding cross-curricular approaches.

Teachers have commented that RiS will support current government initiatives to develop creative, or project based approaches to cross-curricular learning.

Learning Styles.

At Burnbush, the teacher commented that the school uses the Guy Claxton ‘Learning Power’ dispositions and that activities with RiS lend themselves to observing (and assessing) some of these.

Student Voice.

Student Voice is another common priority within education, which is addressed by RiS:

"I would like to use Radio in Schools in music to record live performances and maybe to do some vocal soundscapes; record the school choir and record people doing instrumental lessons. We'd also like to run a proper radio station as well, and get the students' voice heard." Lis Jolley, Bristol Metropolitan College

Extended schools.

There are plans in all schools to use RiS as a means of parent / school liaison, for example, by recording out of school visits and other activities that parents can listen to at home:

"We will be uploading podcasts so that the public out of school can hear them, but we also hope to actually make a direct link with our school website so that our parents can share with friends and families what their children have done at school." Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

This is significant in relation to the extended schools agenda. RiS is therefore a tool that will be of interest to publicly funded projects that seek to deliver to this government agenda, such as Youth Music² nationally, and Remix³ and KWMC⁴ locally, as well as the extended schools team who are already part of the RiS network:

"We've had a lot of interest from parents who are desperate to hear their child's podcasts on the computer. We will put a link onto our own website so they can hear that. At the moment, we are using it to record our Xmas songs so that they can hear what they sound like when they are singing and we can use it as a tool to make them get better." Heather Morris, Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

Vocational opportunities.

The new Diplomas and vocationally focused qualifications will also be a context in which RiS is a very relevant and useful tool:

"Creating a podcast is seen by pupils as a 'real' and valued outcome – this is very significant in the increasing vocational slant in secondary education"

Every Child Matters.

There are various ways in which the use of RiS can address the ECM agenda, for example, teachers have suggested a potential role and value in using RiS with students for whom English is an additional language, for example "pupils to do translations to and from their first language (to support lessons across the curriculum)" and "Podcasts of newsletters home, in different languages."

² Ffi: www.youthmusic.org.uk/

³ Ffi: www.remix-music.org.uk/

⁴ Ffi: www.kwmc.org.uk/

Inclusion

The ease of use and the flexibility of RiS as a tool, along with the common nature of understanding of the medium of radio, means that RiS lends itself to inclusive ways of working:

“It is unusual to experience an activity where all pupils were so excited and engaged together.” Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.

“Presses some buttons for boys where their spoken articulation is more effective than their written.’ It provides outcomes that allow them to achieve real success.” Jill Marsh, Head Teacher, Two Mile Hill Infant School.

3 Ongoing Evaluation

Through having an embedded evaluation process, RiS has developed in an ongoing and informed way, through reflection on the outcomes gathered. In this way the following points have been raised and addressed through the project development to date, which also summarise the recommendations and suggestions made by students and teachers in the evidence gathered:

1. Most teachers stated that it was difficult with only one account to work from and wanted individual student accounts so that students could work on their own in class and potentially at home.
2. Some schools are using PDA applications on field trips and suggested that Radio in Schools would be really useful if there was made possible.
3. All schools felt they needed more information regarding music copyright law, regulations, licensing and the implications of this. Most did not have the time to trawl through the websites or even know where to go.
4. RiS is already getting calls from schools and colleges asking to be involved and have not yet launched. (Including Filton College Music and Media depts, Music dept Henbury, English Dept Henbury etc.)
5. RiS has created partnerships with the following organisations during the pilot scheme:

Global Radio
GWR FM Bristol
Bristol City Council – Brislington City Learning Centre
Bristol City Council - Helen Matthews – Secondary Literacy and English
Bristol City Council - Airlie Fife, Strategy Leader, Primary, CYPS, Bristol
Bristol City Council - Ayleen Driver, Head of ICT, CYPS, Bristol
University of the West of England (UWE) Head of Research – Professor Saville Kushner
UWE Senior Lecturer in Primary Education – Jane Carter
South West Grid for Learning

National Literacy Trust
South West Screen
Children's Online Exploitation Centre (CEOP)
Filton College, Bristol

6. Young people and teachers are definitely interested in competitions that can be easily run in association with local radio stations:

"My name is Abi from St Johns Primary School. It would be really good if you had stuff where you make a podcast and then they see which one is the best one per month then you get to go and meet Bush & Troy or the sports reporter...and then the adults get a tour of GWR."

7. All schools have stated that RiS is a simple tool that can be used across the curriculum including English, Modern Foreign Languages, Music, Drama etc. They see it as a useful resource that can be easily embedded into school activities and which can be used in many different ways, in response to different needs and priorities, to enhance learning.

8. All schools agree that RiS helps with developing a number of skills, especially speaking and listening.

9. The podcasts that students produce are an assessable output, as they can be used as evidence of the students' work, without them necessarily having to write something:

"We have used it as another outcome for units of work." Heather Morris,
Literacy Coordinator, Burnbush Primary School

"Will be very useful for Speaking and Listening assessment for GCSE – and this includes self-assessment and peer assessment (can be used formatively – to help set measurable targets for improvement.)" Nicola Clayton-Jones, Head of English, Cotham, Secondary School.

10. Some teachers thought it would be beneficial to be able to group podcasts into year groups.

11. In all, teachers, schools and pupils were happy with safety and security for the whole Radio in Schools service. Teachers were happy to moderate and found this very easy to do. We did notice in our visits to schools, that some teachers had shared and allowed access to their passwords to the pupils.

Consequent areas for further development

1. RiS has already started development on individual student accounts, and will be ready by February 2009. The implementation of these individual accounts is also of paramount importance so that teachers no longer have to log on pupils/users with their own personal password and account details.
2. In order to maximise security of the RiS system and prevent teachers from sharing passwords with the pupils and to prevent any potential abuse even further, RiS has implemented a system whereby teachers must answer a further security question any time they wish to make significant changes to their password or add new users.
3. RiS is now in the process of developing the Radio in Schools PDA application – 'The Reporter', which means that individuals will be able to produce podcasts out in the field.
4. RiS has now created a partnership with the Performing Rights Society (PRS) and the Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL), both based in London, who hope to contribute to the production of bespoke resources for RiS and school packs.
5. RiS has started further development and re-grouping of the Resources section; but this will be a continual ongoing process as Radio in Schools develops in the future. RiS has also started producing further model podcasts from Global Radio professionals, including more on News, Sports and Weather. RiS will also include sample scripts and powerpoints on 'What is a podcast?', 'Q&A's' with key staff from radio station personnel, including presenters, programme controllers, sales and marketing etc.
6. From discussions with key stakeholders, teachers and other education providers, it is apparent that RiS should build on creating further partnerships in the city. E.g. Remix and Knowle West Media Centre.
7. Introducing Competitions for schools – first one will launch on January 5th encouraging schools to sign up for a free month's trial to Radio in Schools. Promos will run on GWR and features in the Evening Post. We will pick a school at the end of January – who will win a Podcasting Workshop with the Bush and Troy Breakfast show with the best bits broadcast on GWR FM. Further competitions will be introduced throughout the year.
8. Following thoughts from teachers on ability to group podcasts, Radio in Schools has now created separate folders for this.
9. Potential future projects include Transition, links with 'Playing for Success' at Bristol Football Club and further work with Extended schools partnerships.
10. Networking of ideas from teachers; for example, an online forum or 'noticeboard' for ideas. RiS can then develop these ideas in collaboration with literacy and radio consultants into units of work for teachers to use.

4 Cost

Teachers have suggested that schools would pay for this service and have suggested that the cost is based on a sliding scale according to size of school. It has been suggested that small primary schools could pay £200 - £300, whereas secondary schools have suggested £500 - £600.

5 Conclusion

The public nature of podcasting means that young people are engaged in producing something 'real' that is for an audience. This notion of a real audience nurtures a sense of pride in one's work and a self-motivated process of refining one's work is almost inevitable, not just for young people. It is this self motivated process of returning to work to improve it that teachers have highlighted as being central to the success of the project and the impact that it has had. It may therefore be pertinent to explore this further, both in terms of how RiS might build upon this potential and in terms of extending links with educationalists and academics to consider how this finding connects with contemporary debate in the field and how it might thereby inform wider educational development.

The value of RiS lies in its potential to engage, in an inclusive way, and also in the potential for young people to make a 'real' piece of work for an audience. This leads young people to revisit the work and begin to develop self-critical skills, as well as raising their own expectations in terms of the work they produce. It stimulates a 'professional' space in which young people are keen to do their best, as others, including parents, carers and friends out of school might listen to their work. RiS is therefore a flexible tool that engages and inspires young people to improve their own work across any curriculum area or focus. There is therefore great potential for RiS to be used effectively across a range of schools nationally and with a range of partners.



“I have never taught something before where the whole class has been totally engaged, even my less able/confident children.”

Nicky Roberts, Literacy Coordinator, St.Johns Primary School.