

## Melissa Thom introduces *Radio in Schools*

Young people are now more media literate than ever and the growth of social networking websites and user-generated content is on the increase. *Radio in Schools* grew out of this social media explosion, as well as from a desire to engage children in the world of radio and empower them to craft, produce and share their own stories in their own communities, through the simple, powerful medium of radio.

*Radio in Schools* is a national podcasting platform for creating, showcasing and sharing pupils' work. The key to its success lies in its simplicity and design. At the heart of this lies a technical worldwide first – an online 'Virtual Studio' – which means that there is no need to download any complicated software or have any in-depth technical knowledge. So anyone can have a go and can produce high-quality radio content that has real meaning for its users.

The recent publication of the Rose Report stresses the need for all children to establish and develop media literacy skills, with an increased focus on personalised learning, speaking and listening. *Radio in Schools* addresses all these requirements and provides a fun and engaging way for young people to express themselves, as well as creative opportunities for teachers to help deliver ICT across the curriculum and beyond.

### Getting started

Once a school has registered with *Radio in Schools*, they can create their own school homepage or link directly to their school website. From here they can showcase children's podcasts using a range of familiar tools, including blogging and tagging. They can create featured podcasts, post information about their school and share this with their local community.

Burnbush Primary School in Bristol was involved in a pilot study of *Radio in Schools*, and used it across the curriculum – including for history lessons covering World War Two. The pupils went on a trip pretending to be evacuees. They wrote postcards to their parents describing their experience and these were then recorded as podcasts. The project received a lot of interest from parents who were keen to get involved and listen to their children's podcasts at home.



### About Radio in Schools

*Radio in Schools* is a not-for-profit organisation. It is supported by Global Radio – the UK's premier radio company and home to Heart, the UK's biggest radio brand. The project also has the backing of the Department for Culture Media and Sport, British Telecom, The University of the West of England and The National Literacy Trust. Find out more at [www.radioinschools.co.uk](http://www.radioinschools.co.uk).



Future projects will include using *Radio in Schools* to record songs so the children can listen back and improve their work.

"*Radio in Schools* is a wonderful way of children presenting without having to write something down," said Literacy Coordinator, Heather Morris. "It has definitely helped the children with their confidence and it has now become a key tool for planning. I think the Virtual Studio is fantastic. The children find it very easy to use."

Pupils from Burnbush Primary enjoy creating their own podcasts.

**Melissa Thom** is Director of *Radio in Schools*. She has worked in commercial radio for more than 11 years, including being a breakfast presenter and voiceover artist, has produced various interactive websites and e-learning resources, and has overseen the development of national literacy charity *Read a Million Words* across the UK.

