



Introduction

Bradon Forest is an 11-16 comprehensive school in north Wiltshire. ICT is used widely across the school as evidenced by our ICT Mark and recent Third Millennium Learning Award.

What aspect of the learning did the technology address?

Our original bid to the Inspire, Create, Teach, project, was to use a School Radio Station to improve literacy in boys at KS3 but also use the radio fully across the curriculum. Literacy in boys was a whole school project. After the project was agreed we identified pupils in year 7, 8 and 9 who would benefit from additional literacy lessons. These pupils were withdrawn from MFL and the time used for extra literacy included a lesson a week to use the radio. Later in the year the school also introduced Achievement for All which also focused on many of the new literacy group pupils. We also wanted to increase the ways we communicate with our stakeholders and have developed a new website and are rolling out a new Learning Platform. In the meantime we have set up a Radio Page on the current Learning Platform on to which all our shows are loaded as podcasts.

How did you implement it in your school?

We have developed three project areas;

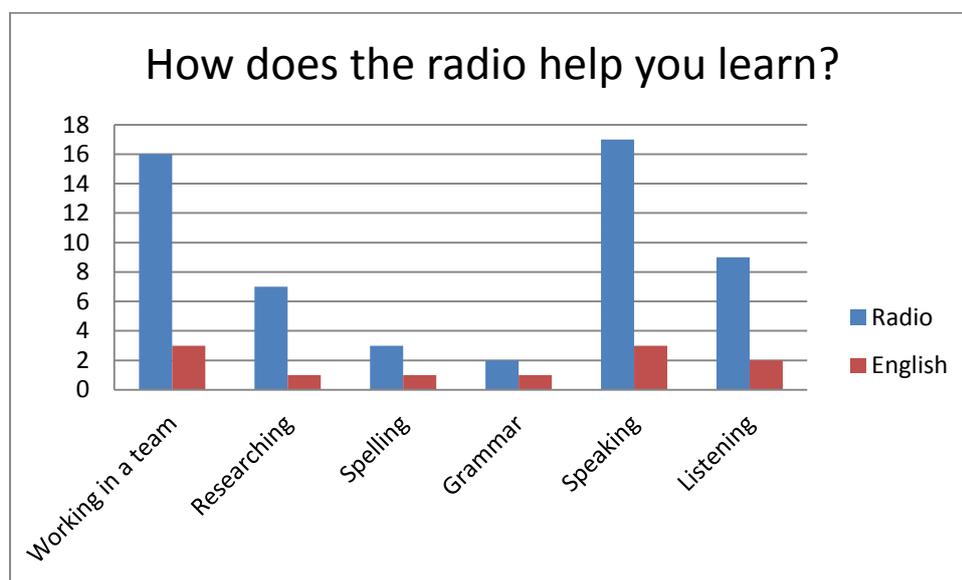
1. Broadcasting a radio show across the school as an AGAT activity. This started as an AGAT activity for one show a week. The radio team has grown as new volunteers have come forward as the pupils heard the shows or were introduced to it in their lessons or were identified by their English or ICT teachers. We now run two shows a week in tutor time and these shows are tuned into by the majority of the school. We have also added revision and other 'specials' all of which are totally run by the pupils.
2. Use in Music, MFL and Geography classes as Lesson Outcomes. In Music the BTEC Music class used the radio to record radio shows that combined music and chat as part of their course. The resulting MP3's were used as their evidence. In MFL a weaker less engaged French class wrote scripts then recorded a show in the target language. In Geography year 7 pupils wrote a "What to do when a Hurricane approaches" broadcast and the year 9's co-ordinated an Earthquake response. Both were recorded as podcasts loaded to the Learning Platform and homework set to listen to it with their parents and to record their parents comments.

3. Timetabled lessons with Literacy classes in year 7, 8 and 9. The themes of these lessons have come out of the English curriculum and have included a One Show type magazine show to develop factual and script writing and a fiction show where the pupils have written their own short stories.

What has been the impact?

There have been many impacts across the school ranging from engagement to rapid progress.

A questionnaire completed by the AGAT group reveals that they all enjoy using the radio - enjoying something allows you to be a good learner. They feel that they learn whilst using the radio and have benefited most in terms of Working as a team and in their Speaking.



A year 8 pupil commented that the best bit was that the pupils were in control as they 'ran the show'.

All radio shows are uploaded to our Learning Platform and the page has been visited times 5,123 times so we have a huge audience!

The impact of a geography lesson was measured by the year 7 pupils. At the start of the lesson the pupils gave themselves a score out of 10 on what they knew about two learning objectives. One they learnt about from a book, the other by writing a radio script and recording it. The pupils then recorded their understanding of the two learning objectives at the end of the lesson. The results showed that on average the pupils made rapid progress on the radio lesson objective jumping from an average 3 to 9, compared to a move of 3 to 7 on the book lesson objective.

Observers commented "Excellent use of resources – able to use the radio equipment to record their broadcasts that can be heard later on by them – again motivates them to do well "

The MFL teacher observed that the year 8 group were much more willing to talk in the target language on the radio than in class. One pupil constructed a sentence in French for the first time!

The Music BTEC group have used the radio as part of their DJ module. All the pupils successfully completed this module.

The impact of the radio on the literacy group has been harder to assess. From the questionnaire the pupils also found that the radio helped them most with working as team and in their speaking. We have used English levels over a 6 month period of radio use. Teachers record English levels 6 times a year so we compared the levels at the first and fourth recordings. On average the pupils progressed by 0.26 of a level compared to an expected 0.3 over the period. Interestingly the boys progressed by 0.29 compared to the girls 0.21. However when we looked at the progress the pupils had made in the previous year it became evident that the pupils had made double the progress this year as in an equivalent 6 months period they averaged progress of 0.1 level. This shows that the literacy strategy, of which the radio project is a small part, is making a difference.

One pupil in year 8 has responded really well to the radio and has made a whole level of progress in the six months of our study. Another who has not been engaged in school has taken on a technical role to run the desk and when he left the school to move out of the area thanked me 'for giving me this opportunity'

Next Steps

The next steps will be to cascade the use of the radio into more areas of the curriculum. A focus group has been formed that includes staff from Design Tech and PE and we will look to expand this next year.

We also want to broadcast to a wider audience by broadcasting over the internet. The Radio team are preparing to do this from September 2013.

But most importantly we are open to ideas that come from the pupils. They have now become our main drivers and owners of this great facility.

Conclusion

The radio at Bradon Forest School has had a big impact mostly because it adds a new dimension to communication at Bradon Forest School. It has added to an already huge diet of ICT across the school. If I had to pick out a top three 'goose bump' moments they would be;

1. Pupils dashing into the room on a Tuesday morning to set up for the show and later pupils around the school talking about the radio show.
2. Receiving an e-mail from a pupil who had spent his weekend making a 'mash up' and asking us to play it on the show.
3. Being thanked by a non engaged year 9 pupil for his involvement.

We would like to thank the Wiltshire ICT team for funding this project and look forward to working with them in the future.