



► **LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION** Kathy August films her broadcast shown live in classrooms every Friday. She said: 'Once we realised the potential of the technology it has proved really successful'. Photograph Lee Boswell

Head stars at Big Brother school

■ Assembly beamed live into classrooms

■ TV network gets message to students

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AHEAD has taken a lesson from the Big Brother TV programme to become a screen star in assemblies beamed live into every classroom in her school.

Instead of gathering students at Manchester Academy into one room, Kathy August uses the school's TV network to give

her message to students. Her face and words are broadcast into 50 classrooms during Friday morning registration – with updates on the latest school initiatives and praise for student award-winners.

Every class in the Moss Side secondary is equipped with electronic projectors which relay the live footage on screen.

Ms August said she hit upon the idea of Big Brother-style broadcasts after realising the importance of having regular contact with the school's 870 students.

She said: "There were a few weeks last year where I had to be out of school and we thought that something like this would

be a good way of staying in touch with pupils. It is important in terms of improving the school that the principal is visible.

"Although we have year group assemblies every day, it is not always practical to bring the whole school in one place.

"Once we realised the potential of the technology it has proved really successful.

"It is all the good news from the last week and also a way of promoting the ethos of our school so that the children feel part of the family."

The 10-minute address is shot by a 'film crew' of specially-trained students from the headteacher's office and can be ac-

cessed later on the school intranet. School bosses are planning more elaborate broadcasts with visiting celebrities asked to give their own messages to pupils.

Students have also been using technology to put their views across to teachers.

They have been asked to vote on a number of issues using the school's internet system. The city academy, which opened in 2003, is sponsored by a Christian charity.