

SSAT National Conference 2018

# PURE IMAGINATION

Wednesday 5 – Thursday 6 December,  
ICC Birmingham

**ssat** the schools, students  
and teachers network

  
**LEXONIK**  
Lead Conference Partner

# WELCOME

**W**elcome to this preview to the SSAT National Conference 2018: Pure Imagination. All of us at SSAT are really excited about this year's theme. We want to celebrate imagination and creativity in its broadest sense: not just creativity in the curriculum, which we think is hugely important, but also: thinking creatively about the curriculum as a whole; imaginative leadership and fostering a culture of creativity across your school; responding to the challenges and questions of the system in new and innovative ways.

Above all, this conference is about thinking bigger, thinking bolder, and challenging the status quo. In 2018, our education system is, we know, highly autonomous but under considerable accountability pressures. As autonomous school leaders, you arguably have greater

flexibility over how you run your schools than any time in the last 20 years: both DfE and Ofsted have been clear there is no one way to achieve. Yet at the same time, we know the pressures you are under from the demands of inspection and high-stakes testing at KS2, KS4, and KS5. Responding both to the opportunity of autonomy and the challenge of accountability requires us to think imaginatively, and ensure that we keep students' learning and wellbeing, along with staff workload and conditions, at the heart of our decision-making. Over the course of the two days in Birmingham, we will look at five key themes, which are explored in the coming pages, along with outlines of some of our main stage speakers and school-led workshops.

» *Imaginative leadership in action: how do you turn ideas into practical realities?* How

can you genuinely take bold decisions in the interests of your students?

- » *Imagine if... we thought creatively about the curriculum:* how do we maintain a broad and balanced curriculum that values the creative subjects? How can we think differently about curriculum design in the current climate?
- » *Imagine if... robots ran our schools:* how can we embrace emerging technologies, including AI and big data, to enhance learning? What is the potential for technology to solve some of today's problems?
- » *Imagine if... it didn't matter where you came from:* what if economic, geographic, cultural or biological

backgrounds didn't determine a child's chance of success? What practical solutions are schools doing to close a range of gaps?

- » **Imagine if... the money runs out** (SBM strand): what is the current financial outlook? How we will respond to future and further challenges?

As always, we will be exploring these themes through a combination of main stage sessions, school-led workshops, panel discussions and our popular 'Spotlight on...' rapid talks.

Our speakers combine a range of educational experts with thought leaders from other sectors we can learn from, including: the BBC arts editor **Will Gompertz**; singer and activist **Charlotte Church**; tech social-entrepreneur **Priya Lakhani**; HMCI **Amanda**

**Spielman**; former HE minister **David Lammy**; and inspiring headteachers, principals, chief executives and other senior leaders from the SSAT network.

We are also looking at new ways of being imaginative in how we deliver the conference, including new-style sessions and a new conference app, which will allow us to offer greater interactivity and engagement over your two days with us and give you a 'greener' conference.

We are incredibly grateful to this year's headline sponsor, **Lexonik**. We have worked with Claire, Katy and the team at Lexonik for a number of years now, and they are truly some of the most imaginative people you could hope to work with! As our literacy partners, Lexonik will be exploring the etymological routes of our conference theme, and what your non-negotiables in education are.

We hope to see many old friends and many new faces at this year's conference, which takes place on Wednesday 5 December to Thursday 6 December at the ICC in Birmingham. In what can sometimes feel like dark times, we need to look for the light together, and imagine what is possible if we think differently and come together collectively.

**See you in Birmingham.**

**Sue Williamson,**  
**Chief Executive, SSAT**



# IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE EVERY SCHOOL LEAVER HAS A BURNING DESIRE TO READ FOR PLEASURE

*CLAIRE PRESTON, CEO, LEXONIK BY SOUND TRAINING, PREVIEWS THEIR PRESENTATION*

Literacy fosters the imagination and is crucial to effective communication. Words change worlds and literacy skills can change lives: yet too many young people have weak literacy skills and no access to books at home. How can Lexonik support your students in improving their literacy skills, help them discover the joy of reading and thereby enrich their capacity for lifelong learning?

Teachers can inspire young people, ignite their imaginations and instil a love of learning. Improving students' literacy enables them to improve their writing, broaden their reading and subsequently gain a better understanding of the world. As literacy improves, doors to undiscovered times and places are opened. Literacy is the cornerstone of the curriculum, it fuels the imagination and enables creativity.

Working in partnership with SSAT, Lexonik aims to provide teachers with the skills they need to improve students' literacy and reading levels, thereby raising attainment. Students will enjoy reading if they are

confident in their ability to read. The Lexonik team will work with your colleagues and students to overcome barriers to reading to ensure that the benefits of the written word and a richer world are accessible to all young people in your school. Through our work with 60,000 students in hundreds of schools across the UK, we have seen how Lexonik training informs and then transforms students' ability to read. Subsequently students develop a greater understanding and love of words and are better equipped to articulate ideas and opinions.

How can Lexonik help you and your colleagues overcome the barriers to literacy development in your students? We would like to and can inspire and support your colleagues to improve the literacy skills of your students. We have trained over 1000 teachers since 2011 and often evoke a reaction of disbelief from colleagues we train: "how did I not know this?" is a common response. Katy Parkinson, founder director of Lexonik, designed and created the Lexonik training programme as a result of her own

determination to discover methods to improve literacy, significantly. The sessions include activities which develop phonological awareness, reading fluency and an understanding of etymology. Students consistently make dramatic progress; 27 months reading age gain in 6 weeks can and does make a huge difference to achievement in all subjects. Lightbulb moments among teachers and students are commonplace and the impact on confidence and curiosity in language is remarkable. We hope to give you a flavour of this, or ideally, your own 'lightbulb moment' during our presentation.

We greatly value our partnership with SSAT and our work with SSAT members. We look forward to meeting you at this year's SSAT National Conference and working with you to create a world where every school leaver has a burning desire to read for pleasure.



Lead Conference Partner

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

SSAT  
Secondary  
Network members  
receive a two-day  
complimentary  
pass

- MAIN STAGE SPEAKERS -

**WILL GOMPERTZ**

B B C A R T S E D I T O R

**CHARLOTTE CHURCH**

E D U C A T I O N A L C A M P A I G N E R  
A N D S I N G E R

**PRIYA LAKHANI**

F O U N D E R O F C E N T U R Y T E C H

**DAVID LAMMY MP**

**AMANDA SPIELMAN**

H M C I A T O F S T E D

**INSPIRATIONAL HEADTEACHERS AND  
LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE SSAT NETWORK**



## 'SPOTLIGHT ON...' SESSIONS

Following the success of these last year, 'Spotlight on...' sessions give leaders the chance to get a quick-fire briefing on a range of topics, not all related to the conference theme. These seven-minute sessions will cover making sense of KS2, KS4 and KS5 results, literacy, formative assessment, governance, state of the system, and curriculum and assessment reform.

## OPTIONAL EVENING PROGRAMME

Join us and our speakers for the **Conference Evening Programme**, which includes an inspirational, high-profile speaker, four course gala dinner, live entertainment and the opportunity to network with school leaders from across the country,

Visit [ssatuk.co.uk/nc18](https://ssatuk.co.uk/nc18) for prices and to book your place.

## THE SCHOOLS WEEK PANEL

Before the drinks reception on Wednesday, our Media Partner **Schools Week** will be hosting a main stage panel discussion, with high-profile contributors responding to topical issues and questions from the floor.

This is followed by the drinks reception, kindly sponsored by **CENTURY Tech**, to which all delegates are invited.

## SCHOOL-LED WORKSHOPS

Over 30 **school-led workshop choices** over the two days of the conference, which will be led mostly by headteachers, CEOs, other school leaders and SSAT Leadership Legacy Fellows.

Some workshops will be led by **ASDAN**, our Workshop Sponsor, looking at how schools they work with take bold decisions and put imaginative leadership into action.

## INDEPENDENT THINKING WORKSHOPS

Back by popular demand, each workshop session will have one choice delivered by a world-class speaker from our partners **Independent Thinking**, who share our principles, values and belief in 'pure imagination'.

[SSATUK.CO.UK/NC18](https://ssatuk.co.uk/nc18) BOOK NOW

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# WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME

09.30

## REGISTRATION, REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITION

10.30

## MAIN STAGE PRESENTATION

### Welcome

*Sue Williamson, Chief Executive, SSAT*

### Reflections on pure imagination

*Andrew Morrish, Executive Headteacher, Victoria Academies*

*David Priestly, Executive Headteacher, Greenfield Community College*

### Being an imaginative leader

*Will Gompertz, Arts Editor, BBC*

12.15

## WORKSHOPS: IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

### All-through education – approaches

*Harris Academy Tottenham*

### What's your story? – the importance of storytelling in imagining your future

*Kingsthorpe College*

### Being flamingos of hope, not lemmings of despair

*Linton Village College*

### Loosen up with lesson study: understanding what enables the best professional learning

*Riverside School*

### Independent Thinking on leadership

*Independent Thinking Associates*

13.00

## LUNCH, EXHIBITION AND STUDENT ENTERPRISE

14.00

## MAIN STAGE PRESENTATION

### Imagine if... we were truly creative about the curriculum

*Charlotte Church, educational campaigner and singer*

15.00

## WORKSHOPS: CREATIVE APPROACHES TO THE CURRICULUM

### Creating curious learners with creative curriculum design

*Brooke Weston Academy*

### It's not about what we can't do, it's about everything we can

*Catcote Academy*

### Building a knowledge curriculum with an oracy focus

*Community College Whitstable*

### Taboo or not taboo? Championing the 'Dark Arts' and creativity in uncertain times

*Formby High School*

### The Ethical Leadership Programme

*Lichfield Cathedral School*

### Independent Thinking on curriculum

*Independent Thinking Associates*

15.45

## REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITION

16.15

## MAIN STAGE PRESENTATION

**Imagine if... robots ran our schools**

*Priya Lakhani OBE, Founder, CENTURY Tech*

**Student performance**

17.15

## WORKSHOPS: PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR USE OF TECHNOLOGY, AI AND BIG DATA TO ENHANCE LEARNING

**Practical ways to develop creativity and imaginative thinking using robotics**

*Finham Park School*

**Just imagine – using tele-presence solutions to support school attendance for pupils with complex needs**

*Hospital and Outreach Education*

**Pupil premium pathways**

*Leeds West Academy*

**Teaching through Instagram**

*Sutton Community Academy*

**Imagination, innovation and instructional design – redefining learning in the digital age with technology and creativity**

*The de Ferrers Academy*

**Independent Thinking on technology**

*Independent Thinking Associates*

18.10

## PANEL DISCUSSION

19.00

## DRINKS RECEPTION

Hosted by CENTURY Tech

19.30

## OPTIONAL EVENING PROGRAMME

Including Gala Dinner hosted by Sparx

23.00

## DAY 1 CLOSE



Workshop Sponsor

Programme subject to change.

turn to page 13  
for School Business  
Manager strand  
programme

SBM

# THURSDAY'S PROGRAMME

09.00

## REGISTRATION, REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITION

10.00

## MAIN STAGE PRESENTATION

### Student performance

#### Imaginative leadership in action

*Members of the SSAT network with Lexonik*

#### Ofsted in conversation

*Amanda Spielman, HMCI, Ofsted*

11.15

## WORKSHOPS: IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

### Think the unthinkable

*Hounslow School*

### Building a gender-conscious leadership culture: respecting the need for diverse and equal school ecosystems

*Skipton Girls' High School*

### Courage to reconstruct the curriculum

*Standish Community High School*

### Future proofing recruitment: introducing sixth form students to a career in teaching

*The Priory Federation of Academies*

### Independent Thinking on leadership for the future

*Independent Thinking Associates*

12.00

## LUNCH, EXHIBITION AND STUDENT ENTERPRISE

13.00

## MAIN STAGE PRESENTATION

### Imagine if... it didn't matter where you come from

*Rt Hon David Lammy MP*

### Student performance

14.00

## WORKSHOPS: PRACTICAL IDEAS TO CLOSE THE GAPS FOR DIFFERENT PUPIL GROUPS

### Taking bold decisions to transform mental health and wellbeing education in our secondary schools

*Aureus School*

### The history boys are dead

*Chobham Academy*

### Raising boys' achievement

*Heathfield Community College*

### Every child, every chance, every day

*Pennyman Primary Academy, Tees Valley Education*

### Reaching the "unreachable"

*Rodillian Multi Academy Trust*

### Independent Thinking on inclusion

*Independent Thinking Associates*

14.45

## REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITION

15.15

## SPOTLIGHT ON SESSIONS

*Curriculum and assessment change*

*Analysing KS2 data 2018*

*Analysing KS4 data 2018*

*Analysing KS5 data 2018*

*Supporting LGBT students*

*Mental health and wellbeing*

*Student leadership*

*Educational inequality*

*Teaching employability skills*

*Embedding formative assessment*

*Supporting female career returns*

*SSAT's approach to school improvement*

*State of the Edu-Nation*

*Leadership lessons from Silicon Valley*

*The future of school-led systems*

*Making the most of SSAT membership*

16.00

## CONFERENCE CLOSE



Workshop Sponsor

Programme subject to change.

# IMAGINATIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

**A**t the heart of this year's conference is a conviction that schools should always do what's right for young people. Although it may not feel so at times, technically England has one of the most autonomous education systems in the world. It is our belief that autonomy should always be exercised in the interests of young people's learning and achievement; and for no other purpose.

However, we know through talking to many of our member headteachers, principals and senior leaders that the demands of the system sometimes makes doing the right thing hard. There is such pressure to perform well against the key measures; and we all know the possible outcomes of a poor year's results or damning Ofsted report.

At the same time, Ofsted is changing. It is clear that the direction of travel for the new framework next year will be to provide a counterbalance to DfE performance metrics, perhaps commenting more on what it feels like to be part of that school. We are delighted that **Amanda Spielman**, Her Majesty's chief inspector, will be

in conversation on the main stage, dispelling myths around inspection and encouraging delegates to use their informed, professional judgements in the interests of students.

Likewise, we are also pleased that there is less focus on threshold measures from the DfE, with floor targets, expected standards and coasting definitions being abolished next year.

This all suggests a more nuanced approach to school accountability. You are still held rigorously accountable for children's outcomes; but the means by which you reach them are determined by you, based on contextual knowledge and understanding.

## **How, then, do you have the courage to take those bold decisions?**

The BBC arts editor, **Will Gompertz**, will be opening the conference alongside headteachers from the SSAT network, advocating that we need to embed a culture of imaginative leadership across our institutions. The benefits of imaginative leadership filter down across your teams, Will will argue. What does an imaginative culture look like? How do you model

it as a leader? How do you embed it across your school? These are some of the questions we'll be exploring at the start of the conference.

Once you have these big ideas, how do they become a practical reality? We will be hearing from headteachers who have taken these bold decisions and enacted them in their schools, both from the main stage and through a variety of workshops.

**Jennie Giovanelli**, headteacher of Kingsthorpe College, will talk about the importance of storytelling in imagining your future; executive headteacher **Helena Marsh** will encourage you to be 'flamingos of hope' not 'lemmings of despair'; and school director **Gemma Cloughton** will challenge us to build a gender-conscious leadership culture.

Other workshops on this theme, which runs across both days, include sessions on the bold use of lesson study, setting up an all-through school, thinking the unthinkable, courageous curriculum leadership – and an innovative approach to teacher recruitment, giving sixth formers a route from voluntary teaching experience to qualified teacher status.

# IMAGINE IF... WE THOUGHT CREATIVELY ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

**L**et's be very clear: the creative subjects are under threat. Almost all arts subjects have seen a decline in GCSE entry rates since the introduction of the Ebacc measure and, despite what Mr Gibb says, this is not a coincidence. Coupled with high-stakes accountability in both primary and secondary schools, and immense budget pressures in many parts of the country, the arts are fighting for survival in the curriculum.

This is wrong. The arts, it barely needs saying, are integral to individual students' flourishing and development. Moreover, we know that the creative industries are of immense value to the British economy and must be nurtured. At their core, the arts explore the very essence of what it means to be human, lived in a shared community. How, then, in the current climate, do we protect them?

Following her guest editorial on BBC's Woman's Hour earlier this year, we are pleased to confirm that **Charlotte Church** has accepted our invitation to speak at this year's conference. While she may not have a background in education, Charlotte

is a passionate advocate for fostering creativity in schools, and is currently in the process of setting up her own school with creativity at the heart. Charlotte's powerful advocacy for the arts will be illustrated by practising headteachers who have been able to maintain the arts as a core part of the curriculum, while at the same time achieving well in the new performance measures. Workshops include **Formby High School**, who continue to maintain what they cheekily call 'the dark arts' in these challenging times.

We know achieving a creative curriculum is a real challenge for schools, and that no one wants to cut arts subjects, but we must speak up when we know that the real decline of arts and technical subjects is wrong.

However, this strand is not just about arts subjects: it's also about how you think creatively about your curriculum. With the former Coalition government's reforms now (almost) fully realised, there is space to think about how a curriculum can meet the needs of your young people while simultaneously meeting your statutory requirements. Ofsted's sharper

focus on curriculum should encourage us to look at it more closely. A diverse range of workshops include the **Brooke Weston Academy**, who put curiosity at the heart of their curriculum design, and the **Community College Whitstable**, who have core knowledge and oracy as their focus.

At SSAT, we do not believe that the 21st century requires a total rethink of the curriculum. The desired outcomes of education needed to thrive in a future economy will not be drastically different from those needed in the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, or the late 20th century. But we do believe that schools should think imaginatively about their curriculum, and do what's right for the children and communities they serve. That's why we've made it a core theme of this year's conference.

# IMAGINE IF... ROBOTS RAN OUR SCHOOLS

**R**obots will never run our schools. We don't believe that robots will ever replace the role of the expert teacher. However, 'robots' – which we use as synecdoche for a range of emerging technologies – may well change how we teach and how we deliver the curriculum.

**Priya Lakhani**, an inspiring tech entrepreneur, will consider from the main stage how technology, in particular the use of artificial intelligence and big data, can help improve learning in the classroom – not replace it. Priya, who founded the CENTURY Tech platform, will argue that existing and emerging technology allows us to personalise learning in a more sophisticated way than ever before, allowing teachers to better understand their students' learning and possible misconceptions, and reduce their workload.

Like us, Priya believes that technology has to be part of a range of pedagogical techniques rather than an end in itself; and yet many schools have not fully embraced the opportunities presented by technology.

This not just true of schools, but across society. Other academics in-

cluding Sir Anthony Seldon and Max Tegmark convincingly argue that AI will be one of the significant drivers of change in the 21st century, but that is rarely discussed in schools, in politics or in other aspects of culture and society. Seldon has called this the 'fourth education revolution', and says education leaders need to think hard, now, about how AI and other forms of technology may help solve a range of problems in schools.

Workshops from schools that have embraced technology include ways of rethinking pedagogical design, linking creativity and technology, from **Greg Hughes** at de Ferrers Academy. Others cover the use of robotics in education, and how to use technology to solve problems as diverse as pupil attendance for hard-to-reach students and closing the pupil premium gap with algorithms and big data.

So while robots may never run our schools, we know that technology can play a much greater and more significant role in education, providing often cost-effective solutions to some of the biggest challenges in the system.

# IMAGINE IF... IT DID MATTER WHERE YO

**U**nfortunately, educational inequality remains a persistent problem in our system. Despite almost a decade of the pupil premium, the national attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their wealthier peers has failed to close.

And it's not only disadvantaged students who underperform: a variety of contextual factors continue to have a profound effect on students' chances of success, including geography, ethnicity, gender, and physical and mental health and wellbeing.

*But it doesn't have to be this way.*

We know that across the SSAT network, many of you are doing wonderful things to close the 'gaps' between students. We use 'gaps' in the plural – because it's about equality and social justice for all young people, across a range of metrics, not just end-of-key-stage achievement. How do we give parity of opportunity to all our students, and ensure that no one is left behind?

School-led workshops in this theme will cover topics such as: raising boys' attainment; a personalised and growth-mindset approach for

# N'T U CAME FROM

every child; mental health in schools; reaching the 'unreachable'; and new approaches to most-able provision.

On the main stage, the former HE minister **MP David Lammy** will consider the possibilities if it didn't matter where you come from. David has been vocal in his criticism of the failure of higher education, especially Oxford and Cambridge, to do more to attract, recruit and retain under-represented students. But he will talk about the wider social justice agenda, looking at links across society.

SSAT is a proud member of the **Fair Education Alliance**, and we encourage all schools to engage with this powerful campaign of educationalists and businesses. We do not believe that educational disadvantage should be tolerated in 2018. But we also know that schools cannot tackle all the roots of this, or indeed all societal ills, on their own. It is only by coming together as industry, schools and policymakers that we will be able to finally make this imagined possibility a reality; and we hope that the conference in December will be one step towards this vision.

# IMAGINE IF... THE MONEY RAN OUT

**All SSAT member schools, whatever phase and type of membership, are invited to bring their school business manager, bursar, or equivalent to the first day of the conference, for a specific SBM strand.**

In the years following austerity, we have seen the role of SBM become more demanding and challenging than ever, but also a trend in which SBMs play an increasingly strategic role in school leadership. We hope that by headteachers coming to the conference with their SBM, we can promote good financial efficiency based on the needs of the students.

We are so aware that many of you are under immense financial pressure; with many schools losing around 8% in real terms over the last five years – despite repeated government as-

surances of protected school budgets and injections of cash. This lack of sufficient funding, coupled with the continuation of historical funding inequality between areas, has been highlighted well by the *Worth Less* campaign, led by headteachers; and the *Raise the Rate* campaign for increased post-16 funding.

The reality is, the situation may get worse. If no new funding is allocated, and costs continue to rise – which they are set to – what can schools, many of which are already on their knees financially, do about it in the coming months?

This SBM theme will offer a positive, practical look at how schools are finding imaginative solutions to the funding crisis, and what practical steps SBMs, school leaders and governors can take.

## **SBM** THE SBM STRAND WILL INCLUDE:

An update on the national campaigns for sufficient and fair funding

The role of the SBM on a school leadership team

Income generation for schools in all contexts

The principles of curriculum-led financial planning

Curriculum-led financial planning in action

Structured speed networking with carefully selected exhibitors

Opportunities for business managers to attend the main conference programme.

turn over  
for full  
programme

09.30	REGISTRATION, REFRESHMENTS AND EXHIBITION
10.30	WELCOME
10.40	THE FIGHT FOR FAIR FUNDING
11.00	THE ROLE OF THE SBM
11.20	INCOME GENERATION
11.40	INTRODUCTION TO SPEED LEARNING
12.00	SBM SPEED LEARNING WITH EXHIBITORS
13.00	LUNCH
14.00	THE PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM-LED FINANCIAL PLANNING
14.20	CURRICULUM-LED FINANCIAL PLANNING IN ACTION
14.40	MOBILISING THE SSAT SBM NETWORK
15.00	JOIN MAIN CONFERENCE PROGRAMME <i>(SEE PAGES 5 AND 6)</i>

Programme subject to change.

## Supporting transition from primary to secondary school

**Lift Off is an activity-based programme helping learners develop the characteristics and skills needed to thrive in secondary school.**

By completing engaging challenges, learners build their confidence and self-esteem as well as fostering attributes such as resilience and determination. They also improve their ability to communicate effectively, solve problems and work with others.

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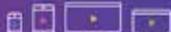
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Peter Myers  
Director - Poole High School



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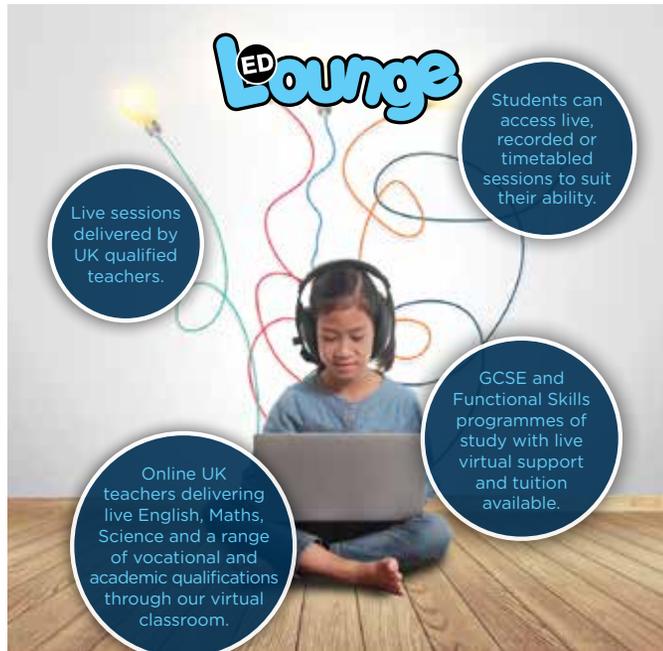
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