

# Brunel University

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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## Introduction

1. This inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors supported by a team of specialist inspectors in accordance with the *Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (2008-11)*.
2. The inspection draws upon evidence from all aspects of the provision to make judgements against all parts of the inspection evaluation schedule in the framework. Inspectors focused on the overall effectiveness of the training in supporting high quality outcomes for trainees and the capacity of the partnership to bring about further improvements. A summary of the grades awarded is included at the end of this report.

## Key to inspection grades

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  |
| Grade 2 | Good         |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   |

## Explanation of terms used in this report

**Attainment** is defined as the standard reached by a trainee at the end of their training.

**Progress** is judged in terms of how well a trainee has developed professionally from their starting point to the standard reached at the time of the inspection or at a suitable review point.

**Achievement** is judged in terms of the progress made and the standard reached by a trainee at the time of the inspection or at a recent assessment review point.

## The provider

3. Brunel University works in partnership with around 400 schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in both primary and secondary phases. The partnership is located across a number of local authorities, most of which are London boroughs.
4. The primary programme offers a one-year postgraduate programme in primary education leading to a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCert).
5. The secondary programme offers three routes to QTS: a four-year undergraduate course leading to Secondary Education (Physical Education) Bachelor of Science (BSc) with recommendation for QTS; a one-year postgraduate course (PGCert) in the following subjects: English, information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, science and physical education; a flexible PGCert with recommendation for QTS in English, mathematics and science. The full-time secondary PGCert programme is

associated with the South West London Teacher Education Consortium (SWELTEC).

## A commentary on the provision

6. The quality of initial teacher education at the university is at least good and trainees achieve well. Provision is best in the primary phase where it is outstanding. A number of significant strengths are shared between both phases and there are few areas for improvement overall. A strong sense of collegiality among centre-based staff underpins provision. The links between university staff and partnership schools are firmly established.
7. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes across both phases:
  - the effective focus on national priorities so that trainees are well prepared to teach early reading in primary, basic skills in literacy and numeracy in secondary, pupils with special needs and/or disabilities and to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons
  - trainees who are well prepared to teach in a diverse and inclusive society
  - highly qualified university staff who are expert in their field and model best practice
  - the high quality recruitment, selection and induction of trainees who demonstrate the potential to be effective teachers.
8. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision:
  - the rigour and precision of self-evaluation in the primary phase to effectively identify areas of improvement.
9. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for secondary trainees:
  - to bring the quality of school based training up to the best
  - use data related to trainee performance with greater precision to strengthen the quality of improvement planning.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

10. In partnership with over 200 schools, Brunel University offers a one-year postgraduate programme in primary education leading to a PGCert. The training programme also offers credits towards a Master's degree. At the time of the inspection there were 142 trainees on the course.

### Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:
- the highly reflective, confident trainees who take every opportunity to gain experience and develop their skills and who possess an excellent understanding of what they need to do to improve
  - the high quality selection and recruitment procedures of trainees who aspire to become excellent practitioners and contribute to high employment rates
  - the high quality and cohesive training provided by the university and the partnership which develops very well the trainees' understanding of theory and practice
  - the excellent support for trainees' pastoral and professional needs and the university's commitment to equality and diversity
  - the high quality and positive impact of the training in the teaching of phonics and early reading skills, the management of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and secure behaviour management skills
  - the proactive use of expertise and research to enhance and broaden trainees' experience and understanding
  - the manner in which leaders strive to improve, anticipate change and implement innovation.

### Recommendations

12. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the provider/partnership should:
- ensure that trainees are clear about how well they are achieving in relation to their potential to become outstanding teachers in training

- strengthen the self-evaluation process to enable all members of the partnership to contribute to the strategic management of the programme.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 1**

13. The overall effectiveness of the provider in securing high quality outcomes for trainees in the primary phase is outstanding. The provision is outstanding and results in high quality, reflective, employable practitioners.
14. Trainees are prepared extremely well to embark on a career in teaching. Overall attainment at the end of the course is outstanding. Well-qualified trainees make good or better progress to achieve the Standards for QTS. The exceptional strength of their personal attributes is a key feature of their achievement. The trainees' ability to reflect on their own learning is particularly impressive. In addition, their commitment to the profession and the manner in which they demonstrate positive values and attitudes are very strong aspects of their development. Professional knowledge and understanding are of a very high standard and trainees have a high level of understanding of both educational theory and practice. For example, trainees teach phonics and early reading skills confidently to pupils in Years 1 and 2 and also use these skills to support older pupils who may have difficulties with spelling. Trainees plan lessons that are interesting and engaging. This ensures that the pupils are motivated and eager to participate in their learning.
15. Trainees demonstrate a good range of strategies to assess pupils' understanding of key concepts and skills. Individual, group and whole-class activities are managed well and trainees show a mature and sensitive approach to deploying additional support within the classroom. Trainees are very competent in the use of visual aids and resources, such as interactive whiteboards, which they use to teach key points. They competently ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully included in all sessions. Trainees are extremely knowledgeable about individual education plans and carefully consult them when they are planning lessons. A good range of behaviour management strategies is demonstrated by the trainees. Relationships with pupils are positive and encouraging.
16. A commitment to equal and fair access to high quality training for all underpins the recruitment and selection procedures and these are regularly reviewed in the light of trainees' outcomes. The provider easily meets its recruitment targets, with very high calibre trainees, and has worked hard to widen participation from groups that are currently under-represented in the teaching workforce. The provider's excellent reputation and word-of-mouth recommendation have resulted in increases in the proportion of minority ethnic trainees, males, and those with a declared disability. This compares favourably to sector norms. Course completion is high and the vast majority of trainees

gain teaching posts, many in the partnership schools. As one mentor pointed out, 'Trainees from Brunel always look professional and are well prepared!'

17. The trainees' excellent achievement is a direct result of very high quality, consistent and coherent training across the partnership. The training model is carefully planned and there is a seamless approach between university and school-based training. University tutors provide exceptional academic and professional expertise which is further enhanced by specialist trainers and visiting speakers. Excellent school-based training experiences ensure that trainees receive the best possible training. Schools recognised for excellence are skilfully deployed in the training programme. For example, trainees gain first-hand experience of teaching phonics because sessions at leading literacy schools are used extremely well to support the development of subject knowledge. The provider is very proud of the highly personalised training which accurately identifies and supports trainees' individual professional and personal needs. Visits to special schools and early years settings enhance the experiences of those trainees who express an interest in these particular areas. Trainees are extremely positive about the quality of training across the partnership. They are complimentary about their tutors, citing inspirational training sessions and personal tutorials which offer excellent support. Trainees indicated that all elements of the training complement each other very well and also meet their needs very well. They report that 'phonics are big at Brunel' and appreciate the excellent booster classes which enable them to improve their skills.
18. The accurate assessment systems are of high quality and fully understood by all trainees and trainers. Class mentors play a vital role in the assessment of trainees and in monitoring their progress. They provide regular mentor sessions which include formal lesson observations and high quality, detailed feedback with clear and focused developmental targets, thus enabling trainees to achieve their full potential. Although trainees have a very clear understanding of how well they are meeting the QTS Standards, they are less clear about how well they are achieving in relation to their potential to become outstanding teachers in training.
19. The university makes outstanding use of available resources to promote high quality outcomes for trainees and to secure further improvements in the quality of provision. Trainees have access to an extensive collection of high quality resources which support their theoretical and practical training. Particular strengths are the availability of teaching aids to support all areas of the primary curriculum. For example, the extensive range of children's books supports the development of early reading skills while the availability of flip-cameras enables trainees to enhance pupils' filming and editing skills. An additional strength is the way in which ICT is used to support training by enabling trainees to collate the evidence of how they have met the Standards.
20. There is exceptional commitment across the partnership and this ensures that there are high quality outcomes for trainees. Systems to support trainees and schools are highly effective because the provider uses its detailed and up-to-date knowledge of the schools in the partnership to plan placements that

match the individual needs of the trainees. Class mentors appreciate the university-based training for them and praise the individual arrangements made when attendance at an event is not feasible. Class mentors consider the handbook to be invaluable and a recent toolkit for mentoring has been very well received. High quality written guidance indicates clearly the roles and responsibilities of class mentors and trainees. Communications are excellent, and when issues or problems arise they are rapidly dealt with. Partnership systems are consistently evaluated and reviewed. For instance, the Primary Partnership Management Group (PPMG) meets regularly to evaluate practice and the bi-annual moderation process for link tutors ensures that there is a consistency across the school placements. The partnership is truly a two-way system with local schools using the provider to develop their own teachers' knowledge and understanding. This is evident in the way that local schools confidently send their staff to the university to develop their understanding of phonics, early reading skills and the teaching of gifted and talented pupils.

21. The provider demonstrates an exemplary commitment to promoting inclusion, equal opportunities and ensuring equality of access. There is an exceptional commitment to meeting the needs of individual trainees and the personalised approach ensures that all trainees feel very well cared for, respected, valued and supported. Excellent support is provided for trainees with a declared disability or those who consider themselves vulnerable because of personal issues. All trainees have good opportunities to gain experience of planning for and teaching pupils from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and they understand how to cater effectively for the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented.

## **The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality**

**Grade: 1**

22. The extent to which the leadership and management at all levels has the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes is outstanding. This is because of the excellent quality of leadership, which uses a range of evaluations very well to focus on sustaining the best outcomes for trainees. All those involved in the partnership share a clear vision to maintain the highest quality training and to be respected as highly-sought-after teachers who make a real difference to children's lives.
23. Leaders and managers work extremely effectively as a coherent team to review the strengths and areas for improvement. As a result of the good quality and extent of its self-evaluation, the provider has been able to identify appropriate priorities for the future. This is exemplified well in the way that trainee outcomes have been carefully collated and analysed following a slight dip in attainment after the introduction of the Master's credits. The views of the PPMG group are taken into consideration at the meetings once a term and there is strong evidence of the positive impact of this group on trainee outcomes. For example, the implications of government policies on teacher training are discussed and there has been a review of the length of training



days for mentors. However, the group's overall impact on the self-evaluation process is less evident. For instance, members of the PPMG group are not confident to speak of the wider strategic direction of the programme and the university agrees that more partners could be involved in this process.

24. Leaders and managers anticipate change extremely well and the well-founded responses make a very positive impact on improving trainees' outcomes. High quality improvements are made based on excellent subject knowledge, an in-depth understanding of educational theory and best practice. For example, the university has responded extremely well to the Training and Development Agency (TDA) priority of behaviour management. By employing a headteacher who delivers realistic and practical lectures, this has had an exceptionally strong impact on the trainees' confidence in managing pupils' behaviour in the classroom. The response to the national priority of improving the quality of the teaching of phonics and early reading has resulted in increased skill level and greater trainee confidence. Trainees understand the relevance of teaching key concepts across the curriculum areas and using ICT skills to support learning. Research projects are used extremely well to sustain and improve the provider's capacity. For example, the university's 'cutting edge' mathematical research is used to strengthen trainees' subject knowledge and to provide expert support for schools requiring guidance on how to develop pupils' problem-solving techniques.
25. Planning and taking action for improvement are outstanding. Leaders are proactive in driving forward improvement and responsibilities for programme development are delegated very effectively. There is a very strong link between evaluation, reviewing, prioritising and keeping abreast of national and local initiatives. Improvement planning is extremely rigorous and there is a clear drive towards continuous self-improvement and enhancement of provision which improves trainees' outcomes. Rigorous analysis and careful consideration are given to evaluations from the trainees, class mentors, partnership schools, internal moderations and external examiners. All stakeholder views are carefully considered and the information gained is used to inform planning and changes to the course. For instance, the university's strong profile in the most recent survey of newly qualified teachers reflects a growing confidence in trainees following the targeting of aspects such as special educational needs and behaviour management. Action planning is very detailed and thorough. Targets for course improvement are very specific and tightly linked to resource requirements. For example, the university has trialled the reduction of tutor visits per final placement but, in response to feedback, the third visit will be reinstated next year.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

26. The three secondary routes include a full-time PGCert with recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in English, ICT, mathematics, physical education and science. Provision also includes a flexible PGCert, with recommendation for QTS in English, mathematics and science. Finally, there is a four-year undergraduate course leading to BSc Secondary Education and Physical Education with recommendation for QTS. The training programmes also offer credits towards a Master's degree. At the time of the inspection there were 252 trainees: 100 were following the four-year BSc course and 152 the PGCE course, of which 28 were following a flexible route tailored to their needs in English, mathematics and science.

### Key strengths

27. The key strengths are:
- the highly reflective trainees who demonstrate secure subject knowledge and effective management of pupils' behaviour based on positive relationships within lessons
  - the high quality recruitment, selection and induction of trainees who demonstrate the potential to be effective teachers
  - the preparation of trainees for teaching pupils in a diverse society
  - the highly effective use of outstanding resources to support both training provision and opportunities for extending the education experience of trainees and enrichment for pupils in local schools
  - the effectiveness of the highly qualified leadership team in responding to national initiatives and driving forward innovation.

### Recommendations

28. The provider should:
- ensure that all placement schools provide the best possible opportunity for trainees to make better progress, that all mentoring is of the best and that there is consistently high quality communication between the provider and all schools
  - strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning especially in ensuring rigorous analysis of data related to the progress of all trainees and the setting of clearly measurable and precise targets based on high expectations of trainees' outcomes.

## Overall effectiveness

**Grade: 2**

29. The overall level of effectiveness is good. Good provision ensures that trainees achieve well during their respective courses and are well prepared to teach within a diverse range of schools.
30. Highly effective procedures are in place to both recruit and select good quality trainees with the potential to teach. The recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is highly successful because of the effective promotion of the relevant courses to these groups. The proportion of these trainees selected for the respective courses is well above the sector average and fully reflects local diversity within schools. Completion rates are very high and many trainees go on to be successful teachers in partnership schools. Data for the last three years confirm that attainment overall is good. Analysis of the latest data for all undergraduate and postgraduate courses indicates that the attainment of trainees in mathematics and physical education is outstanding. There is yet to be a sustained trend of improvement to this higher level in all other subjects.
31. Trainees demonstrate very secure subject knowledge and confidence in managing pupils' behaviour in lessons. All trainees develop quickly positive relationships with pupils during school placements because they are able to use a wide range of activities to engage pupils in worthwhile learning. Trainees make effective use of ICT to engage pupils actively in lessons and to support their learning; for example, using an interactive whiteboard in mathematics to demonstrate a new process and using a video clip of pupils' performance to support assessment at the end of a physical education lesson. Detailed lesson planning is a common characteristic and trainees make it very clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. However, sometimes this planning is not always closely matched to the ability of all pupils in the class. Trainees demonstrate a good ability to manage groups of learners to facilitate effective learning and the good development of pupils' personal and social skills; for instance, in an English lesson using group discussions to extend pupils' communication skills. Practical lessons are managed well and good attention is paid to risk assessment and health and safety in science and physical education. Although questions are used well to check pupils' previous learning, they are not used consistently to accelerate learning for all ability groups.
32. The quality of training is good. Cohesion between centre-based and school-based training is good. Well planned modules contribute effectively to a comprehensive school-based training programme. Trainees enter the courses with good subject knowledge. Subject audits are used effectively to identify strengths and gaps in knowledge and to address identified weaknesses through individual training plans. The emphasis on increasing trainees' understanding and knowledge of national initiatives, such as managing pupils' behaviour in lessons and addressing the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is exceptionally good.

33. Centre-based staff are highly qualified and use their expertise very well to strengthen and develop trainees' subject knowledge and to provide them with opportunities to develop their skills in the classroom. Highly effective use of ICT enables trainees to access a wide range of resources to develop their teaching activities. Excellent facilities are used well to support the development of trainees and to enhance the opportunities within the partnership. In physical education, for example, access to first class sports facilities supports outstanding levels of performance.
34. High quality mentoring leads to most trainees achieving their full potential. Many mentors are experienced, skilled practitioners who provide exceptionally good guidance and support for trainees. They use their expertise to develop trainees' understanding of the skills needed to become competent class teachers. Mentors ensure that trainees are given opportunities to observe good practice. This contributes to trainees developing the confidence to take risks as they modify their teaching skills to engage and meet the needs of learners.
35. Most placement schools provide good training venues which contribute effectively to trainees' good progress overall. However, not all trainees receive the same standard of support because some mentors may be new in the role and lack the necessary skills in giving purposeful feedback to trainees to ensure that they know exactly what they need to do next to improve. This limits the ability of all trainees in reaching the highest possible outcomes by the end of their respective course.
36. The assessment of trainees' progress is good overall and underpinned by the robust SWELTEC procedures. Schools appreciate the consistency of these which they use effectively to guide their work in supporting trainees. Subject mentors and link tutors use the procedures confidently to inform their work when assessing and reviewing the performance of trainees. Targets are specific and linked clearly to subject knowledge and professional development. However, the quality of trainees' files of evidence in meeting the Standards is variable and does not necessarily underpin good progress in all cases. For instance, some trainees do not use a full range of exemplar evidence to illustrate how well they have achieved the Standards and there is an over-reliance on lesson observations.
37. The SWELTEC systems for recording achievement incrementally in each school placement support short term target setting and the overall monitoring of trainees' development. However, trainees are not always sure about what they need to do next to achieve the highest levels of performance against nationally recognised grading criteria. This limits the provider's ability to track trainees' progress systematically over time and to use data rigorously to support self-evaluation. The introduction this year of an optical mark reader (OMR) system for collecting performance data is a positive step forward.
38. The quality of provision across the partnership is good overall and has been strengthened by the setting up of the Partnership Development Unit. This initiative encourages better working between the provider and schools to the mutual benefit of all. As a result, this positive and close relationship within the

partnership is leading to greater coherence and the development of courses tailored to the needs of placement schools. Strong links exist with schools in the locality to extend the range of opportunities for trainees to widen their experience through enrichment activities. Regular training, geared to the individual needs of mentors, is improving the quality of school-based provision overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. However, some variability in the quality of mentoring still remains and this compromises the principle that all trainees should receive high quality training throughout their course. Furthermore, some inconsistencies in communication still exist between the provider and trainees, and this leads to unnecessary anxiety related to the allocation of school placements, such as those postgraduate trainees following the flexible route.

39. Detailed policies and procedures fully support the effective promotion of equality and diversity. Trainees are well prepared to teach in a diverse range of schools. Equality and diversity underpin their training and development, and are actively promoted through events such 'One World Week'. Course leaders ensure that trainees are given opportunities to listen to the views of experts working in the field of equality and diversity. Placements are also well considered to ensure trainees teach in contrasting schools. This broadens their experiences and prepares them for teaching in a wide range of settings within a diverse society. As a result, trainees display a growing capability in being able to meet the needs of learners at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Overall, trainees with a disability are given the necessary support because comprehensive procedures are followed to ensure that they succeed.

## **The capacity for further improvement      Grade: 2 and/or sustaining high quality**

40. The provider's capacity is good to sustain high quality outcomes for trainees and to take the necessary actions required to secure improvements where necessary.
41. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and based on a good range of monitoring systems to facilitate the effective internal annual review of each subject and courses. The close alliance of these reviews to the headings within the self-evaluation document (SED) headings is a positive development to enhance future improvement planning. There are good procedures in place for the moderation of standards across the partnership and within the SWELTEC consortium. A range of data related to trainee performance is now being gathered through the innovative use of an OMR system to support future self-evaluation. Currently, the provider is yet to analyse this data rigorously to identify areas for improvement that directly impact on the outcomes for trainees. Good use is made of key stakeholders, such as experienced mentors and senior staff within schools, to support self-evaluation through feedback and participation at training events and annual conferences. However, this is based

on very positive and effective relationships rather than rigorous systems and processes. Findings of trainee surveys and module evaluations are used well to inform future strategic planning and course development.

42. The ability of the provider to both anticipate and respond to change is outstanding. Current national priorities are fully covered within all subjects, courses and professional studies programmes. For instance, the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is firmly embedded within both physical education programmes. This provides trainees with the skills and confidence to apply a range of techniques in lessons to develop pupils' basic skills alongside physical development. Training for all subjects incorporates areas related to the management of pupils' behaviour in lessons. Trainees speak very positively about this improved level of input because it gives them the confidence to handle difficult behaviour effectively in what can be challenging circumstances. University staff are expert in their fields and research makes a significant impact on course development such as within English. The Partnership Development Unit plays a significant role in strengthening relationships and links with schools within the partnership, SWELTEC and the locality, for instance, in recruiting higher proportions of well qualified trainees and increasing the capacity of leadership based within the school of education.
43. The development and use of ICT is seen as a key priority within the school of education and the university overall. ICT is being used imaginatively to support the future tracking of trainees' progress. Examples of this innovative practice are demonstrated in the development of distance learning materials, the use of an OMR data gathering system and the enhancement of the virtual learning environment. Several initiatives with partnership schools provide increased opportunities for trainees to extend their levels of experience such as working with a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, working with gifted and talented pupils from London schools in mathematics workshops and links with sports initiatives in the local area.
44. Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within existing provision. Senior leaders provide clear direction and ambition to secure improvement and teamwork is a strong feature. Detailed subject plans identify areas for improvement in the current academic year. These plans are carefully linked to the SED format to support overall strategic planning and improvement in provision. However, the results of detailed analysis of trainees' performance are yet to be used systematically to inform future action and to ensure that trainees achieve the highest possible outcomes. Furthermore, some success criteria are ambiguous and too general in nature, making them difficult to measure. Targets are focused mostly on improving provision and not sufficiently linked to improving trainees' outcomes.

## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

**Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding; grade 2 is good; grade 3 is satisfactory; grade 4 is inadequate.**

### Overall effectiveness

|   |  | Primary  | Secondary |
|---|--|----------|-----------|
| <b>How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?</b> |  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| Trainees' attainment  | How well do trainees attain?   | 1        | 2         |
| Factors contributing to trainees' attainment  | To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?  | 1        | 1         |
|   | To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points? | 1        | 2         |
|   | To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?   | 1        | 1         |
| The quality of the provision  | To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?   | 1        | 2         |
| Promoting equalities and diversity  | To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?             | 1        | 2         |

### Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

|  |  | Primary  | Secondary |
|--|--|----------|-----------|
| <b>To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?</b> |  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?  |  | 1        | 2         |
| How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?                                   |  | 1        | 1         |
| How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?  |  | 1        | 2         |

<sup>1</sup> The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the *Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11*; Ofsted November 2009; Reference no: 080128.

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