

# Holly House Special School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131322
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360256
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Muir HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Iain Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Brandt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Church Street North Old Whittington, Chesterfield S41 9QR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 450530
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 450530
<b>Email address</b>	info@hollyhouse.derbyshire.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	7–14
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	360256

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<b>Boarding provision</b>	Holly House School
<b>Social care Unique Reference Number</b>	SC056234
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Jo Vyas

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, one social care inspector and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 13 lessons and nine teachers were seen. Meetings were held with: a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a range of staff, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the nurture manager and a range of middle leaders. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, monitoring and evaluation documents. Seven parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors explored the accuracy of the school's monitoring of pupils' progress across all areas and both key stages of the school.
- They considered how well the curriculum and other activities meet the needs of all pupils in all key stages so that they are ready to transfer to the next stage of their schooling.
- They looked at how well the management raises and maintains expectations and aspirations across the school.
- They investigated how well the teaching meets the needs of all pupils taking into account the changes in the cohort and their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

Holly House is a small special school for pupils who have severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, often with other complex learning difficulties. Although designated as a mixed gender school, all the pupils are boys and all have a statement of special educational needs.

The school has been re-designated as a Specialist College for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. Prior to their admission, almost all pupils have had a disrupted education and have been excluded from mainstream schools. Pupils come from all over Derbyshire. There is a residential facility, in which some pupils board for up to four nights a week during term time, according to need. The boarding provision was also subject to inspection during this visit.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Holly House School provides a good standard of education. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, particularly around the care of pupils and the way the school safeguards them, allowing them to feel safe and well looked after. The school is a caring and inclusive community based around a nurturing ethos. There are strong working relationships between the residence and the school, including the joint setting of targets which develop pupils' behaviour well. As a result, pupils' behaviour improves during their time in the school and this is seen in the mutually respectful relationships they have with the adults who work with them. The school works hard to find ways to engage parents and carers using a variety of technologies to support this. The school sees strong relationships with parents and carers as a vital part of the three-way partnership of school, pupil and home. Staff continue to seek additional ways to communicate with parents and carers who are less engaged.

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Training is provided for staff around the full range of needs which pupils bring to the school. During their time in the school, pupils make at least good progress. The work that the school does in preparing pupils to learn is supported by the outstanding curriculum with its impressive emphasis on planning to meet individual needs, and a wide range of additional activities, often suggested by pupils. These are implemented in the options and extended-day activities provided by the school and residence. These activities provide an exciting and ever-changing array of opportunities, which many pupils have not previously had, to ensure that school is an attractive and positive prospect for them. Although attendance is low, individual pupils show significant improvements in how regularly they attend school due to the way it increases their enjoyment when they do attend. In the best lessons, teachers provide learning experiences which engage and interest all pupils and challenge them to make good progress. Pupils are keen to discuss and share their learning and develop skills in assessing their own progress, through skilful questioning by staff. The support provided by the teaching assistants is well targeted and well judged. This allows pupils to develop their independence while also being aware that support is available if required.

Information from assessment is being used increasingly well. Systems which have been recently introduced monitor pupils' development based on a range of factors including personal well-being and academic progress. This is providing increasingly good quality data which supports teaching and learning. The school has developed a wide range of partnerships to support learning and well-being. These are used very effectively to enable pupils to develop readiness to learn, contributing well to their good progress. A recently developed partnership supports pupils in their ongoing transition to their next stage of learning. Monitoring of pupils after they leave school shows that they are being well advised about their progression routes after leaving Holly House School. Several pupils who left in 2010 moved on to mainstream schools where they are maintaining their

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placements. This is a very positive outcome considering their unsuccessful experiences in previous mainstream placements. The school is working to build links which promote the pupils' spiritual and cultural development which is currently satisfactory. Their moral and social development is a focus of the school's work and improvements over time in these areas is good as a result.

The drive and the enthusiasm of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are clear and they provide effective strategic direction. They are well supported by staff that have the success of the pupils as the focus of their work. Staff are enthusiastic about the opportunities they are given to contribute to the development of the school and relish the chance to use their own experiences and interests to do so. The development of the nurture groups through the school's specialism is impressive and provides pupils with a strong start. It also contributes very effectively to developing the school's pupil-centred ethos. Community cohesion is satisfactory as the school knows and understands its context well and develops activities and provision to meet this, but it is not yet analysing the impact of this on the school and wider community. The work of the governing body is satisfactory as its members provide good challenge and support, but are not regular visitors to the school and are not well known in the school community. Leaders know where improvements are needed and are aware of the strengths of the school. Due to the improvements in provision and outcomes and the clear plans for further improvement, the school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Evaluate the impact of community cohesion and use this information to improve the quality of this aspect of the school's work.
- Develop the work of the governing body so that it organises regular visits to monitor aspects of the school's work at first hand.
- Develop further ways to increase engagement with parents and carers so that they are supported in ensuring that their children attend school more often.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds from their own and promote awareness of different cultures.
- The school must ensure that it meets the National Minimum Standards for boarding which have not been met.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Due to the nature of the school, pupils enter with low attainment and are often disengaged from education, with a history of poor attendance. Although pupils leave the school with low attainment, their transformation is notable. They improve significantly in their attitudes to learning and in their personal development. This is seen through pupils' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire and their engagement and behaviour during lessons. Pupils' behaviour shows significant improvement. They enter the school with inadequate behaviour and attitudes to learning. By the time they move on, their behaviour has often improved to the extent that they can successfully re-engage with mainstream education. During the inspection, inspectors observed all classroom teachers and learning seen in the majority of lessons was good. Some outstanding and some satisfactory learning was also seen.

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Pupils feel very safe in the school and parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire unanimously agree. This is shown in the increased attendance for individuals as they grow to see the school as an exceptionally safe and positive environment. The school has developed a positive anti-bullying ethos which pupils are very supportive of and respond well to. Pupils appreciate the school's procedures which support this feeling of safety. The wide range of options and extended-day activities which are available, provide the pupils with an impressive array of opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles. A large majority of pupils engage in these activities and all parents and carers who expressed a view, agree that the school supports healthy lifestyles. The development of pupils' workplace skills is good as during their time in the school, they improve in their basic skills, participate in a range of enterprise and other activities, develop their social skills and understand the importance of improved levels of behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall and the school is looking at ways to develop this through enhanced links with schools in other countries among other initiatives.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

The large majority of teaching seen during the inspection was at least good, with none being less than satisfactory. This agrees with the school's own view and shows that senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The better lessons clearly focus

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on engaging pupils and providing a variety of tasks which are well matched to pupils' needs and interests. Pupils assess their own learning in relation to their targets. Lessons focus on building pupils' confidence in their learning and are characterised by positive relationships between adults and pupils. Good links are made between pupils' prior attainment and expected learning. The developing knowledge which staff have of the needs of young people with various special educational needs and/or disabilities increasingly contributes to the overall good and improving outcomes.

In both key stages, the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It is well planned with topics being adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. A good example of the way the curriculum is designed to engage pupils was the drumming session seen during the inspection. This provided challenging work for pupils to sing, drum and dance simultaneously and develop movements of their own. All pupils were fully engaged, enthused and excited by the work they were doing, with staff leading by example. The school is working to develop links between subjects, so that there are more opportunities to develop a thematic approach to learning. Extra-curricular and outdoor activities are mainly delivered through afternoon sessions and extended-day sessions. These are well attended with over 90% of pupils choosing to access them at some point. Care, guidance and support are outstanding overall as they promote pupils' good personal development, alongside several outstanding areas. Excellent use is made of multi-agency support, including strong partnerships with support services. Support and advice provided for families is strong and the school makes strenuous efforts to reach out to families within their own local areas. Transition arrangements when pupils enter the school, and leave it, are outstanding and are increasingly well tailored to meet the specific needs of each pupil. This allows pupils and their parents and carers to receive maximum support at this time of uncertainty so that the move in to the school or on to the next place of education causes as little disruption as possible. It is also becoming evident through the improved collection of evidence, that when pupils move to their next placement they are successful.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has developed a strong community identity shared by all staff and there is a common sense of purpose based on high expectations for all. The leadership team works very successfully to promote high expectations for staff. The specialism has helped to develop an inclusive ethos based on nurture methods. This has also helped to promote strong equality of opportunity as all pupils are monitored closely on an individual basis and any signs of underachievement are tackled well through targeted interventions. This is the starting point and focus of the school's work in ensuring that all pupils make at least good



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progress. The school is developing systems to monitor the progress of pupils across all aspects of their development, and these clearly show that progress is at least good in terms of both achievement and personal development.

The school's work on community cohesion is satisfactory as there is a good awareness of the context of the school. However, the school has not formally measured the full impact of its work in this area. A good array of partnerships supports the school's work in educating pupils and promoting their personal development. The school's safeguarding procedures and policies, including child protection, are outstanding, showing that all adults working with pupils are appropriately recruited and vetted. In addition to this, the school undertakes exemplary initiatives such as the regular surveying of pupils, partners and parents and carers as to their evaluation of safeguarding in the school which is used well to inform practice. The role of the governing body in challenging the performance of the school is well targeted and improving. However, more work needs to be done to raise the profile of the governing body in the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Boarding provision**

The quality of the boarding at this school is good. The majority of the national minimum standards are met, with a significant number exceeded. The school has complied with the recommendation made at the previous inspection about medication systems. However, there are two recommendations made in this report with regard to first aid records and medical services. This school currently provides boarding for five pupils. Pupils board on a part-time basis, spending the majority of their time with their parents or carers. They spend one or two nights in residence each week. However, up to 91% of pupils access the extended-day provision.

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The school's ethos and underpinning philosophy is strong throughout, ensuring pupils who board are in a supportive and caring community within which they are valued and safe. Boarders develop good relationships with each other and with staff. They enjoy boarding. Staff actively promote the health of boarders. They are suitably trained in first aid and accidents are few and far between. However, consent from parents and carers has not been sought with regard to staff providing first aid treatment. Staff have good procedures for the safe management of medication and have received training. The school has access to an education psychologist and other mental health services but the access is limited and does not reflect the complexity of needs for current pupils. However, staff provide good support for parents, carers and pupils by attending healthcare appointments with them when required. There are lots of opportunities for boarders to take part in physical activities on and off site. The school provides a varied diet which caters for the individual needs of the pupils. Boarders have an active say in what goes on the menu and they enjoy healthy food.

Safeguarding pupils is a priority at this school. Staff receive regular training and are competent in their knowledge of the school's safeguarding procedures. The school also train the pupils' taxi drivers and escorts to ensure they have a good understanding of the pupils and know what to do if an incident occurs therefore, ensuring the safety of pupils in their care. Boarders were able to identify the people they are able to talk to and when asked how they can make complaints they said, 'It's simple'. Staff take their concerns seriously and resolve issues where possible. The privacy and dignity of boarders is respected. Staff have a good knowledge of the bullying policy and bullying is dealt with immediately. Boarders say bullying rarely occurs in residence. This is in part due to good staffing levels and the way boarding is organised. Staff also carry out activities with boarders to help them understand and accept difference. Staff know what to do if pupils go missing but this has not occurred in residence. There are good health and safety procedures in place.

Staff view pupils positively and there is a relaxed, family atmosphere in boarding. Staff have all received training in physical intervention but rarely use it. They said the training focuses on de-escalation techniques, distraction and diffusion which is what they successfully use. When physical intervention is used, it is for the right reasons and done in the right way. Behaviour that challenges is managed competently and professionally. Additionally, the school uses a good incentive system which the pupils enjoy and enables them to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Observations and discussions with staff demonstrate that staff ensure each boarder's individual needs and aspirations are fully addressed. Planning documentation is detailed, clear and accessible. Staff know the boarders well. Boarders' achievements are celebrated. Staff work closely with education staff and parents and carers, where possible, to provide a positive approach to education and promote its value for boarders. Staff organise activities for pupils when they stay in residence, such as sports, cinema, clubs and so on. Pupils also have clear targets which are agreed by the pupil, education and care staff. These include behavioural targets and manners.

Boarders are accommodated within one of two areas designated for residence within the school. There is a homely environment with good quality furnishings. Bedrooms are not currently shared. Boarders are presently completing art work to hang on the walls in their bedrooms. Communal areas are bright, comfortable and have photographs of boarders on the walls. The boarding areas are clean, tidy and well maintained. A boarder said that 'It is a nice environment'. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a

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consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Boarders receive an individual service which is designed to meet their personal needs and aspirations. The school leadership team has a strong commitment to improving practice and ensuring the quality of the service provided. Staff are qualified, caring, professional and competent. They feel well supported by each other and the school leadership team.

**National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care**

- Obtain and retain on file for each child, prior written permission from a person or body with parental responsibility for that child, for the administration of first aid. (NMS 14.10)
- Ensure there are effective arrangements to secure specialist medical services including psychological and psychiatric advice, treatment and support to children needing these services. (NMS 14.10)

*These are the grades for the boarding provision*

<b>The effectiveness of the boarding provision</b>	<b>2</b>
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**Views of parents and carers**

A small minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and these were generally positive. The responses and positive comments reflected the inspectors' judgements in most areas.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly House Special School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received seven completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	5	71	1	14	1	14
The school keeps my child safe	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	43	3	43	0	0	1	14
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	29	3	43	1	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	1	14	4	57	1	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	43	3	43	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	5	71	1	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	43	3	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	43	3	43	1	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	29	5	71	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	57	3	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	43	2	29	1	14	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Holly House Special School, Chesterfield, S41 9QR**

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for making our visit extremely interesting and enjoyable.

We found that your school is good. The headteacher, and other staff all work very hard to make sure that you have a positive experience in school so that you can be successful during your time there. Your personal development is generally good and you feel very safe. Although some of you said that behaviour is not good, we found evidence to show that your behaviour and attendance improve well when you are in school. You all work hard in your lessons and the progress you make is good. The care, guidance and support which you receive are outstanding. Your increasingly positive attitudes to learning and how everybody in the school contributes to making it so successful were inspiring to see. Your contribution to the school's work is strong and is a key element in making the school the success that it is.

During our time in the school, we identified four areas which need to be improved to make the school better. I have asked the school to do the following

- evaluate the impact of community cohesion and use this information to improve the quality of this aspect of the school's work
- improve the work of the governing body so that members visit the school more often and are known by the school community
- develop further ways to increase engagement with your parents and carers so that they are better able to support you in attending more often
- provide more opportunities for you to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds from your own and promote awareness of different cultures.

You can help the school to improve by suggesting to the staff ways that they can improve the areas above. Once again, thank you very much for the time you spent with us during the visit and we would like to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector

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