

St Anselm's College

Manor Hill, Prenton, Merseyside CH43 1UQ

Inspection dates 29–30 November 2016

Requires improvement	Overall effectiveness
Requires improvement	Effectiveness of leadership and management
Requires improvement	Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
Good	Personal development, behaviour and welfare
Requires improvement	Outcomes for pupils
Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes
Good	Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have an overgenerous view of the quality of education provided by the school. Consequently, they have not taken effective action to improve the progress made by current pupils so that it is at least good.
- In 2016, pupils' rates of progress declined. As a result, pupils underachieved in a range of subjects, including English, science and the humanities. The overall rates of progress made by pupils were below the national figures for similar pupils.
- Current pupils do not make the progress they should in relation to their very high starting points, especially in key stage 3. Pupils are not inspired to develop a thirst for learning.
- The difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is not diminishing quickly enough. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils continue to underachieve.

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good. Pupils are not challenged to achieve their full potential. Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Therefore, pupils' rates of progress are too slow.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is too variable and lacks consistent challenge. Subsequently, students do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not consistently use their assessment of where pupils are in their learning to plan for more rapid progress. Pupils routinely do the same work, regardless of their ability.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's feedback policy is used consistently well by teachers. For this reason, errors persist in pupils' work and misconceptions go unchallenged.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils receive high-quality opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils give generously to charity and volunteer in the local community.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous.
- The school's extra-curricular provision is wide and varied. Pupils enjoy the range of activities available to them.
- Pastoral support is strong. Pupils and parents appreciate the help and guidance adults give them.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers use their assessment of where pupils are in their learning to plan effectively for more rapid progress
 - ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to think for themselves
 - ensuring that pupils are challenged in all lessons to achieve academic excellence.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that there are sufficiently high aspirations and expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - ensuring that leaders have an accurate view of the quality of provision across the school to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring that the school's assessment and feedback policy is consistently implemented
 - ensuring that teaching develops a thirst for learning and allows pupils to excel across a range of subjects, especially at key stage 3.
- Improve the rates of progress made by:
 - disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they
 make similar progress to other pupils nationally with the same starting points
 - pupils so that they achieve the standards of which they are capable and so that they attain the highest grades
 - students following academic courses in the sixth form so that they reach their full potential.

A review of governance should be undertaken to assess how governors may improve their work.

A review of the use of pupil premium funding should take place to check how this aspect of the school's work could be improved.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, do not have sufficiently high aspirations for what pupils can and should achieve. They have allowed standards to decline since the previous inspection and have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching so that it consistently promotes high levels of progress. Although leaders have started to address shortfalls, current information provided by the school does not convincingly show that pupils in Year 11 this year will make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders recognise that expectations are not high enough in relation to pupils' typically high starting points and are now addressing this. It is, however, too early to see the impact of their work.
- Leaders, including governors, have an overgenerous view of the quality of education provided by the school. Their actions to ensure that pupils make the progress that is expected of them have been inconsistent. Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to address underperformance in some subjects, especially English and science.
- Leaders do not have sufficiently rigorous information to inform them how well pupils are doing across the school and across subjects. Consequently, although pupils achieve good grades in their examinations and assessments, these grades are not high enough in relation to their very high starting points. Leaders have new systems for target-setting and for measuring the progress pupils make to ensure an increase in challenge. It is, however, too early to see the impact of those new systems on pupils' progress.
- The systems leaders use to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not yet sharp enough. Consequently, leaders have been too slow to acknowledge that pupils are underchallenged in some subjects. This is because teachers do not consistently plan learning that stretches and challenges pupils or promotes scholastic excellence. As a result, pupils do not make the excellent progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers use the school's marking and assessment policy consistently well. Pupils are sometimes unclear as to whether their classwork is correct. Teachers' feedback is not consistently effective in helping them to know what the next steps are in their learning. Pupils' books do not provide a secure revision base because misconceptions are not routinely identified. In some subjects, for example English, there is a lack of challenge to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should. A small number of parents have concerns about these issues.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is not yet good. Leaders' use of the additional funding from the government to support disadvantaged pupils is not having an impact on pupils' progress. Leaders have plans in place to improve the support disadvantaged pupils get; however, it is too soon to see the impact of those strategies.
- Leaders do not ensure that there is adequate support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils do not do as well as they should.
- The curriculum, although it is broad and balanced, sometimes does not allow pupils to



complete the combination of qualifications that they wish to study. Some pupils are unhappy that, if they study separate sciences for example, they cannot also take an art or technology subject. As a result, pupils do not always study the breadth of qualifications of which they are capable. The impact of the school's current mixedability structure in all subjects, except science and mathematics, is that teachers do not routinely plan for the full range of abilities within their class. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Leaders, alongside the school improvement partners, have reviewed their plans to improve the standards in the school following the disappointing 2016 results. Leaders' action plans are clear and identify how improvements will be made. As a result, there is clear capacity to improve the school. It is currently, however, too early to see any impact from those plans.
- Leaders know opportunities for teachers' ongoing training require strengthening. Leaders recognise the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of the current programme to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- On the rare occasions when leaders make use of alternative provision, pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress are tracked. As a result, pupils continue to make progress and leaders ensure that they are safe.
- The school's procedures for assessing teachers' performance against the teachers' standards are robust.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest quality. Tutor time is a powerful experience. Leaders commit to providing a wide range of opportunities to enhance pupils' development. The Catholic life of the school also provides pupils with the opportunity for spiritual reflection and Christian worship. As a result, pupils gain a good understanding of the school's commitment to the 'Eight Essentials of Edmund Rice Education'.
- The school offers a full range of experiences, including overseas visits, musical productions, concerts, charity work, community volunteering opportunities and sporting activities. Pupils are proud of their excellent achievements and they value this feature of an Anselmian education.
- Leaders' work to promote British values is strong. Pupils have a strong grasp of the democratic process and they are tolerant of other people's views. The teaching of equalities is also a key strength. Pupils accept that people are different and know that they must value and respect each person for who they are.
- Relationships between leaders, staff and pupils are purposeful. Staff are unreservedly positive about the work leaders do to support them across the school. Pupils too appreciate the work their teachers do to help them to achieve. As a result, staff morale is high and pupils are satisfied with the overall quality of education that they receive.

Governance of the school

■ Governors have not been rigorous enough in holding leaders to account for the progress made by pupils in the main school or the students in the sixth form. Although they are committed to the pupils, they have allowed a decline in standards to occur. They do not have sufficient knowledge about how groups of pupils are achieving, for



example the most able. They do, however, know which subjects need to improve. There is a culture of excuses about the underperformance of the boys in the school. This is because governors do not fully recognise that they serve pupils with high attainment on entry, in comparison to other schools nationally.

- Governors have not effectively held leaders to account for the additional funding from the government to support the school's small number of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, governors have not ensured that this funding has the maximum impact on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, so that they make at least the same progress as other pupils nationally with the same starting points.
- Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are highly effective. They receive regular updates about the impact of safeguarding policies on practice and, consequently, they ensure that leaders maintain the highest standards.
- Governors are adamant that the pupils at St Anselm's must receive a rounded education which promotes pupils' personal growth. Governors are aware of the strength of the pastoral support offered by the school and are rightly proud of it. Governors, however, lack rigour in challenging leaders to ensure that the school's curriculum best prepares its pupils to excel and reach their full potential.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a very strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff receive regular training to enable them to spot the signs of abuse and they have the opportunity to contribute to future training. Referrals to other agencies are timely and appropriate. School leaders are exceptionally diligent in following up any potential issues and, therefore, pupils are safe.
- The school uses filtering software to ensure that pupils are safe online. The restrictions on what pupils can access are age appropriate. For example, in the school's sixth form, students have wider access to material to enable them to complete research for their courses.
- Pupils are taught well about staying safe across the curriculum. They also have dedicated time to learn about their personal safety through 'Health and Well-Being Day'. As a result, pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe and have a mature, sensible view of the dangers that face them online. Pupils have received a series of assemblies delivered by an external agency about child sexual exploitation. Consequently, they are aware of what to do and who to go to if they, or one of their friends, are at risk.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school works very closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils are safe. Work to support pupils at risk is robust and links to multi-agencies are strong. As a result, there is a safe climate for learning for the pupils at St Anselm's.



Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Teachers do not routinely plan work that stretches and challenges pupils to think for themselves. In some subjects, teachers do not use the information that they have about pupils' prior attainment to plan carefully for activities that enthuse, inspire and develop a love of learning. Pupils, regardless of how able they are, routinely do the same work. As a result, the progress pupils make over time does not lead to the highest standards of attainment.
- Teachers do not use the school's marking and assessment policy consistently well enough. Pupils are sometimes unclear as to whether their classwork is correct. Teachers' feedback is not consistently effective in helping them to know what the next steps are in their learning. Pupils' books do not provide a secure revision base because misconceptions are not routinely identified. In some subjects, for example English, there is a lack of challenge to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should. A small number of parents have concerns about these issues.
- Pupils do not always take sufficient pride in their books. In addition, teachers do not challenge poor-quality presentation and some work goes unfinished.
- Some teachers underestimate what pupils are capable of achieving. Some teaching is uninspiring and lacks challenge. This results in dull work that can lead to occasional low-level disruption. Where pupils are challenged, for example in science subjects and physical education, pupils make rapid progress because they are engaged in their learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop extended answers in preparation for examinations. As a result, pupils do not always show sufficient flair and independence of thought in their written responses.
- The learning environment does not promote a thirst for learning. In classrooms, there is little evidence of the celebration of current pupils' work. As a result, some pupils are not inspired to excel.
- Teachers' questioning skills are inconsistent in quality. Where learning is strong, for example in art and computer science, pupils are challenged to explain the rationale for their answers and justify their responses. Misconceptions are addressed. However, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to think for themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in the vast majority of lessons. There are effective routines and systems in place. Pupils apply themselves diligently and complete the activities they are given.
- Teachers have the secure subject knowledge they need to ensure that pupils can excel across the school. However, ongoing teacher development is not yet sufficiently well planned to address the shortfalls in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, improvements in the quality of teaching have not been swift enough since the previous inspection.
- Homework is routinely set. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning. Pupils regularly complete their homework because they value the impact it has on their learning and progress. Parents believe that pupils get homework that is appropriate and relevant to help their children to progress.



- Extra-curricular provision is excellent. Pupils have access to a wide range of activities, including sports, music, languages, arts, historical and scientific clubs. As a result, the wider skills pupils acquire beyond the everyday curriculum are well developed.
- Teachers effectively promote diversity and challenge stereotypes. The school's ethos permeates the school. Pupils live out the school's mission statement to 'respect the dignity of God's creation, and inspired by Gospel values, seek to serve one another'. As a result, there is a strong culture of tolerance and respect across the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) helps pupils to develop a strong understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. They receive a good range of information through the school's 'Health and Well-Being Day.' In Year 7, for example, pupils learn about water safety with the RNLI and how to stay safe online, including the dangers and implications of 'sexting'. They also are made aware of how to stay safe on the roads and about the impact of bullying on all those involved. There is an ongoing PSHE programme that takes place once a week. However, teachers do not routinely plan lessons which are challenging enough to give pupils the depth of understanding of which they are capable. Pupils are, however, aware of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and they know who to go to if they need more advice.
- Pastoral support in the school is excellent and pupils are unreservedly positive about that support. Parents echo this view. Pupils have a strong network of peer mentors, teachers and other staff who provide information, advice and guidance. Pupils respect one another and, as a result, bullying, when it occurs, is dealt with quickly and appropriately. Consequently, pupils, including those in alternative provision, feel safe and are safe.
- Careers education, information, advice and guidance are good. Pupils have a range of opportunities available to them to make informed choices about the next stages of their education. Pupils told inspectors that they really value the support they get. As a result, most pupils know what courses will allow them to progress to the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils are expected to reflect on their progress during individual reviews with their teachers. They complete an evaluation of where they are in their learning against the school's assessment. If, for example, they are 'coasting', pupils are expected to set themselves targets to improve.
- Pupils have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to their local community, for example, through the Saint Vincent De Paul Society. Within this group, pupils help local elderly people and fundraise for charitable causes, demonstrating a spirit of cooperation and dedication to others.



■ Although pupils have opportunities to become resilient, self-assured and self-confident in their learning, the lack of challenge in both PSHE and day-to-day lessons results in missed opportunities for pupils to demonstrate a love of learning. This impacts on the overall progress pupils make.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and thoughtful. They behave well around the school grounds and are fully respectful of the environment. They describe their school as a part of their family; there is a strong community feel. Pupils feel the school 'is their home from home'.
- Pupils rarely use derogatory language around the site and they routinely show respect for one another. Relationships between pupils are strong and they take pride in their appearance and in their school. As a result, the school is a harmonious community where the boys develop into well-rounded young men. This is because the school facilitates pupils' growth spiritually, morally, socially and culturally with a plethora of rich experiences.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders constantly work to ensure that pupils attend school every day. As a result, pupils' attendance is higher than is seen nationally and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is much lower than the national average. Leaders' ongoing work to secure improvements in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been successful.
- Some pupils feel that behaviour in a minority of lessons is not as good as it could be. This frustrates them as they want to learn and do their best. Moreover, pupils' concentration sometimes wavers because they are underchallenged in some lessons. For these reasons, pupils do not always demonstrate the flair and passion for learning that they are so capable of showing.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school with very high prior attainment, far higher than is seen nationally. By the end of key stage 4, pupils do not reach their full potential because teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.
- In 2016, the standards pupils achieved declined. Although the overall proportion of pupils who achieved English and mathematics at a high grade was above the national average, the progress pupils made across the school was below the national average. Pupils underachieved, especially in English and core science, and this underperformance continues in the current Year 11.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, did not make the progress they should have. As a result, the standards they achieved across a range of subjects were below those of other pupils nationally. In particular, disadvantaged pupils underachieved in English, the humanities and science.
- Currently in school, disadvantaged pupils continue to underachieve. Some teachers do



not have sufficiently high aspirations for what disadvantaged pupils can achieve. They do not pay sufficient attention to removing barriers to learning. Consequently, the progress these pupils make is lower than other pupils nationally with the same starting points. This difference is not diminishing quickly enough.

- The progress made by pupils across key stage 3, although improving, is not yet consistently good across subjects, especially English. Leaders know that far more challenge is needed to stimulate pupils to achieve their best. This is certainly the case in Year 7, where pupils sometimes repeat the work they have done in primary school. Consequently, momentum in learning is lost.
- Although the progress made by current pupils in key stage 4 shows improvement, standards are still not high enough. In key stage 4, the school's own information about pupils' current progress does not demonstrate consistently good outcomes. In some subjects, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. As a result, insufficient numbers of pupils achieve the highest grades.
- The small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make sufficiently good progress. Leaders know this is an issue and have plans to provide additional support.
- Pupils read widely and often. The library is used frequently by pupils and they talk confidently about their favourite authors and their preferred genre of texts. Inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils were confident and were able to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Pupils have a love of reading.
- Pupils' communication skills are well developed. As a result, pupils contribute well to discussions and can articulate responses with precision when challenged to do so.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the English Baccalaureate is significantly above the national average.
- All pupils progress to further education, employment or training. A high proportion of pupils stay on into the school's sixth form.
- Almost all pupils achieved a good grade in English and mathematics in 2016. This is an improvement on previous years.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Students on academic courses in the sixth form do not make the progress of which they are capable. Over time, academic standards have declined. In 2015, leaders recognised that standards were not high enough. However, in 2016 there was further underachievement in a range of subjects, including biology, English, art, media and business studies.
- The new sixth-form leader is passionate about improving the academic provision in the sixth form but it is too early to see the impact of that work on outcomes. Leaders are now tracking progress rigorously and involving parents quickly when they are concerned about students' attitudes or work. The sixth-form leader recognises that over time the quality of teaching has been inconsistent and that currently it is still too variable. This has led to outcomes which are not yet good.
- Teachers' expectations of the standard of work students produce is too variable. As a



result, students' organisational and presentational skills are not sufficiently well developed. Consequently, their notes are sometimes untidy and difficult to follow. This hinders their learning and progress.

- The written feedback that students get in the sixth form is inconsistent in quality. Sometimes they have work which is not marked and goes unchecked. This is contrary to the school's policy. The result is that students do not always know if their work is accurate. Leaders know they need to strengthen the school's approach to assessment.
- Students' verbal responses to teachers' questions are not as well developed as they should be. Teachers do not routinely challenge students to apply the concepts and skills they study to a range of different contexts. Consequently, students do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- The head of sixth form and a group of subject leaders have started to meet to discuss and evaluate the reasons for underperformance on academic courses in the sixth form. Currently, discussions focus on general strategies to improve teaching and they do not delve deeply enough into how the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment can be improved in particular subjects.
- Students' attendance in the sixth form reflects the excellent attendance of pupils in the main school. As a result, they are keen and ready to learn.
- There is strong careers advice and guidance for students in the sixth form. Local people visit the school to talk about their careers. This opens students' minds to a wider range of career pathways. Leaders provide careers fairs and there are a range of opportunities where students can volunteer to support others. As a result, students are knowledgeable and informed about their future career pathways.
- Progression rates to university are much higher than the national average. In 2016, the overwhelming majority of students went on to university and several students progressed to higher-level apprenticeships. The proportion of students making successful applications to Oxbridge universities is also increasing year on year. Students appreciate the strong support they receive from their teachers towards their university application forms.
- Progression rates into the sixth form from the main school are very good. Leaders work hard to ensure that disadvantaged pupils stay on into the sixth form and, as a result, the number continues to rise. Bursaries are available to support disadvantaged students. Retention on courses is also secure. The overwhelming majority of students who begin in Year 12 continue into Year 13.
- Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students are very loyal to and supportive of the school and their teachers. They seize opportunities afforded to them, for example through the prefect system. They support younger pupils effectively through their work as peer mentors. Consequently, they develop a range of leadership and ambassadorial skills.
- Students make an invaluable contribution to the school community and wider society, for example through charity work, work in Sierra Leone and intergenerational work. There is also a wide range of opportunities to volunteer in the local community. These opportunities include the 'Friday Club' which works with adults who have learning and physical disabilities and work to provide support and help for asylum seekers, as well as a commitment to work with the Missionary Sisters of Charity to provide help to



homeless people in Liverpool. As a result, students live out the Edmund Rice mission to 'give to the poor in handfuls.' They are knowledgeable about current issues, empathetic with others who are less fortunate than themselves and have a strong commitment to social justice.

- The progress made by students on the vocational sports course is excellent. They achieve well and enjoy their studies.
- Very few students resit GCSE mathematics and English because they already have those qualifications. Students that do resit these examinations are well supported to ensure that they are successful.



School details

Unique reference number 136780

Local authority Wirral

Inspection number 10019391

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school Grammar (selective)

School category Academy converter

Age range of pupils 11 to 18

Gender of pupils Boys

Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study

Boys

programmes

Number of pupils on the school roll 907

Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study 202

programmes

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair John Brown

Headmaster Simon Duggan

Telephone number 0151 652 1408

Website www.st-anselms.com/

Email address headmaster@st-anselms.com

Date of previous inspection 29–30 October 2013

Information about this school

- St Anselm's College is an average-sized grammar school and sixth-form college for boys. It became part of the Edmund Rice Academies Trust in January 2011. As such, the school is part of a global network of 300 schools in 25 different countries.
- The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged, and therefore supported through the pupil premium funding, is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.



- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school does not receive any Year 7 catch-up funding because pupils who entered the school have attained and exceeded the nationally expected standards at the end of key stage 2.
- The school occasionally makes use of the Wirral Respite Alternative Provision.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2015.
- The school met the key stage 5 interim standards in 2015.
- The school complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.



Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a range of lessons across key stages 3, 4 and 5. Several observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed an assembly and form time across the school.
- Inspectors undertook an in-depth analysis of pupils' work in several subjects across the school, including the sixth form. This was jointly conducted with both senior and middle leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, middle leaders, teachers and newly qualified teachers. A phone call was made to the school improvement partner.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised by the inspection team, including the school's own self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, the school improvement partner's reports and departmental review documentation. Inspectors also considered records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, records of ongoing teacher training, minutes from the meetings of the governing body, information about how well current pupils are progressing in their learning and analyses of past pupils' performance and behaviour and attendance records.
- Observations of pupils' behaviour were undertaken before the start of the school day, between lessons, during breaktimes and at lunchtimes. Inspectors met formally with a range of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 and with students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors took into account 251 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 237 free text responses from parents, 41 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 298 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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