

# The Reynolds Group Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

26 February–1 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers oversee and track learners' progress very effectively.
- Learners on performing arts, fitness, horticulture and beauty courses develop very effectively the skills and knowledge they need to become successful practitioners.
- Teachers use their impressive industry experience well to enthuse and engage learners.
- Learners work together very effectively. They listen carefully, work hard in lessons and respect each other's views.
- Leaders and managers listen intently to the views of learners, staff and employers. They act quickly and positively to make sure that they improve the provision.
- Learners benefit from comprehensive and timely feedback from teachers which helps them understand how they can improve their practical work.
- Most learners achieve their vocational qualifications. A high proportion of learners quickly gain English and mathematics functional skills qualifications.
- Study programme learners develop a good understanding of the world of work through useful work experience placements.
- Learners develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Those who have had disrupted education learn the importance and benefits of training.
- Leaders and managers do not check the quality of newer provision in enough detail. They have been slow to identify and remedy weaknesses.
- The small number of adult learners in provision in the north of the country do not have the same breadth of additional activities and further learning as their peers in the south.
- Not enough learners achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics qualifications.
- Leaders and managers do not make sure that a small number of teachers improve quickly their teaching skills.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Reynolds Training Academy (RTA) is the training arm of the Reynolds Group and provides learning programmes for 16 to 19 and 19+ learners. The main subjects are performing arts, beauty therapy, and sports and fitness, with a very small horticulture provision. Most learners study together in mixed-age groups. The RTA principal reports to the chief executive officer, who is also a Reynolds Group owner, and who provides governance. The Reynolds Group includes a separate company whose spas, gymnasiums and gardens provide some of the work experience and employment for RTA learners.
- Just under half of RTA's provision is based in Dartford, Bexley and Borough Green in Kent, and at Waterlooville in Hampshire. Since August 2018, RTA has been working with four new subcontractors, based throughout the south. These companies offer courses in fitness, English and mathematics, employability, and security, and courses for vulnerable people of all ages. Since October 2018, RTA has developed a new level 3 beauty and fitness provision based in Manchester, Oldham, Durham and Hull, which is overseen by staff in Dartford. Courses in these northern locations account for around one sixth of the provision.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should check the quality of all new provision, particularly the courses run in the north, so that they can identify and deal with weaknesses quickly.
- Leaders should ensure that learners on courses in the north of the country have access to a similar range of additional activities and further learning as their peers in the south.
- Leaders, managers and staff should help more of those learners on GCSE courses to achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers should improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, by:
  - extending their appraisal processes to include all teachers
  - planning and tracking progress on weaknesses identified in lesson observations to make sure that all teachers are improving their skills quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and managers are ambitious for their learners. They have developed a curriculum which gives learners a wide range of opportunities and aligns with business plans for the whole Reynolds Group as well as fulfilling local needs. For example, they increased substantially their beauty and fitness programmes to give learners a route into employment in Reynolds' gymnasiums and spas and at the Reynolds Retreat. Employers in and outside the Reynolds Group value the effective links that leaders and managers have established.
- Leaders develop learning programmes that support their learners successfully. They identify subcontractors who complement the ethos and programmes of their parent company. For example, their contract with Walk Tall enables disaffected young people to re-engage in learning. Leaders and managers work closely with county council staff to provide courses for learners who are not in education, employment or training to learn beauty skills.
- Staff are proud to work at RTA. They value the strong management and the ways that leaders motivate them to do their best. They appreciate the unwavering attention that leaders give to helping learners develop positive attitudes to learning and work.
- Managers and teachers manage their programmes effectively, particularly in the Dartford, Bexley and Waterlooville centres. They plan teaching and assessment in detail. They include work experience and talks from guest speakers when planning courses to improve learners' knowledge of the world of work. Programme managers know their learners well and have high expectations of them. They place the few learners who have education, health and care (EHC) plans on highly beneficial programmes where they develop their independence and employment skills. Managers update and review EHC plans carefully and make sure that these learners receive effective support.
- Leaders and managers take account of the views of learners, staff and employers and act on these to make improvements. They hold frequent meetings with class representatives to gain feedback about the quality of learners' lessons. They include learners in annual assessments of courses to improve their quality. Leaders react quickly and positively to feedback. For example, leaders altered start times and term dates on beauty and fitness programmes to fit around learners' childcare and other external commitments. In response to employers' comments, managers added specialist industry-specific courses to help learners become more employable.
- Leaders and managers check learners' progress frequently and in detail. They identify learners at risk of falling behind and make sure that teachers intervene quickly to keep them on track. Teachers help learners to overcome their barriers to learning. They help learners to take advantage of services such as counselling to enable them to overcome personal problems. Almost all current learners make good progress.
- Senior managers prioritise tasks successfully to make sure they happen on time. Where teachers identify that learning is adversely affected by resources, senior managers take swift action. For example, an observer identified that tables in a nail services practical lesson were too wide. They reported this to their manager, who quickly provided

replacement industry-standard tables with fans.

- Leaders make sure that teachers are well trained, and have extensive experience and suitable vocational and teaching qualifications. Many continue to work in the industry while teaching and are specialists in their disciplines. They use their skills and knowledge to inspire learners. Leaders encourage and support teachers to use their good contacts to secure interesting guest speakers who enliven lessons and enthuse learners. For example, learners recreate theatre production show numbers under guidance from cast members in current West End shows.
- Leaders and managers use data more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection. They set sensible yet ambitious targets for learners' achievement for their own and subcontracted provision. However, they do not set similar targets for attendance and first-time pass rates to enable them to measure their improvements more fully.
- Senior leaders use appraisals effectively to improve managers' performance. They concentrate in detail on how effectively managers carry out their job roles. They set managers clear targets for managing the provision and their teams. However, managers do not include the results of teaching observations in teachers' appraisals. They do not appraise all teachers or set clear enough targets for teachers to improve learners' attendance or achievement. Consequently, a few teachers do not improve their performance quickly enough.
- Most teachers know how to improve classroom practice. Managers who observe teaching and learning generally make accurate judgements about the main strengths and weaknesses of lessons. However, observers do not concentrate sufficiently on how learners are increasing their knowledge and what progress they are making in the lesson. Managers do not check how quickly or effectively teachers improve weaknesses identified in lesson observations.
- Leaders and managers do not check the quality of all subcontracted provision in enough depth. Managers prioritise monitoring activities with one of their four subcontractors. They review aspects such as safeguarding, teaching and staff training frequently and thoroughly. They set clear targets for learners' attendance, achievement, progress and for teaching observation grades. Managers' monitoring of the other three subcontractors is less detailed. They have only recently identified that too many learners left their courses at Creative Learning Partners without achieving.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governance is effective. The chief executive officer works closely with senior leaders and sets high expectations for learners and staff. The active role taken by the chief executive officer during senior team meetings makes sure that change and decision-making happen quickly. The chief executive officer supports senior managers and leaders in subcontractors effectively.
- The chief executive officer and senior leaders make sure that managers check and improve the quality of their programmes in Dartford, Bexley and Waterlooville. However, they do not discuss the quality and outcomes of the small amount of provision in Manchester, Oldham, Durham and Hull in enough detail during senior management meetings. Managers have been slow to act to make sure these learners achieve on time and have the high-quality experience that their peers enjoy.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers keep detailed safeguarding records. All staff, subcontractors and guest speakers complete necessary safety checks. Managers apply safe recruitment practices when appointing new staff. Staff are well trained in safeguarding. They understand their responsibilities within the 'Prevent' duty. Managers have developed comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that staff apply effectively.
- Leaders have suitable systems for identifying learners at risk or who are vulnerable. Where incidents occur, the safeguarding team works effectively with learners and external partners to support them and help them continue their studies.
- Learners are safe and know how to report concerns. Managers check frequently learners' understanding of staying safe. Learners speak positively about the 24-hour helpline they can call if they have any worries. They understand how to stay safe online. Learners know about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, but do not learn enough about how this relates to their everyday working lives.
- Learners in performing arts do not have access to industry-standard flooring in the studios where they learn. Although teachers and learners know the negative physical effects for their bodies, leaders have not found ways to mitigate the long-term physical implications of dancing on hard floors.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Learners are highly motivated and work very hard. They make good progress, both in lessons and with their qualifications. Almost all work to a professional standard and improve their practical and theoretical knowledge and skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of learners. They support learners admirably and enable them to produce high standards of practical work. They help learners become more confident about their practical abilities and to develop a passion for their subjects. Learners value the support they receive and the professionalism of their teachers.
- Teachers use their very strong industry experience well to inspire and motivate learners. They help learners to improve their technical knowledge of their vocational subjects. They enable learners to understand the expectations of the industries they aspire to work in. For example, visits from professional choreographers enable performing arts learners to improve their knowledge of different forms of dance. Skilled and professional beauty teachers share new initiatives and techniques to make sure that learners understand the latest developments in the industry.
- Learners work very productively. They develop the teamwork skills that they need when in employment. Teachers help learners improve the ways they assess and support each other effectively. For example, in singing lessons, performing arts learners evaluate performances in terms of emotion, storytelling and sound. Beauty learners carry out beauty treatments on their peers and give each other detailed feedback about how they can improve.
- Most teachers use a wide variety of engaging and interesting activities which help

learners develop their subject knowledge. For example, learners in fitness work in pairs to develop programmes for clients with medical needs or with a desire to lose weight. Learners trial the activities and feed back to each other, highlighting positive points and ways to improve. Performing arts learners develop their knowledge of warm-up activities to enable them to take warm-up sessions on their own.

- Learners receive immediate and detailed oral feedback from teachers during practical activities, which quickly helps them improve their work. As a result of these comments, learners become skilled at identifying faults and correcting themselves. They learn how to work professionally and to a high standard. Learners note down feedback from teachers at the end of their lessons and use this to help them improve their work.
- Learners develop their practical English and mathematical skills successfully. Teachers plan vocational lessons and tutorials carefully to include activities such as reading, presentations, calculations and role play. Learners work with clients to help develop their English speaking and listening skills. Fitness and performing arts learners analyse numerical data on heart rates and performance. Learners on beauty courses calculate precisely quantities of products when preparing treatments.
- Learners gain a strong understanding of diversity through the resources they work with and the practical activities they undertake. Teachers encourage performing arts learners to choose singing materials from a wide range of genres and artists. Learners on beauty courses usefully develop their knowledge of the cultural and faith requirements of clients.
- Not enough teachers of beauty and fitness use information about learners' starting points to make sure that all learners achieve their full potential. They do not plan sufficiently to make sure that most-able learners receive sufficiently challenging work. As a result, a few learners become frustrated when teachers ask them to repeat techniques in which they are already confident and competent.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Learners enjoy their learning and take pride in the quality of their written and practical work. Performing arts learners become more self-assured and become skilled at singing, acting and dancing. Learners on beauty courses are professional, smartly attired and proud of their work with clients. Fitness and horticulture learners become more confident and self-assured. They work sensibly together and with their teachers.
- Learners' behaviour is very good. They are polite and listen to their teachers intently. They are positive and optimistic about the progress that they are making. They support each other to develop high levels of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Almost all learners are very enthusiastic about their learning.
- Staff use their strong links with employers to support learners who want to work in their industries. Performing arts learners work with a professional agent who helps them find part-time work. Teachers on beauty and fitness courses inform learners about vacancies in local salons and gymnasiums.
- Staff support learners who decide not to continue in the industry. However, learners have only very recently had access to high-quality impartial careers advice and guidance to help them understand the full range of possibilities for their future. The small numbers of learners at Walk Tall do not receive enough clear guidance from teachers about what they

can do next and consequently are unsure of their options.

- Staff help learners develop the skills that they need for employment and further and higher education. They work closely with learners to help them write CVs and develop their interview skills. Teachers improve learners' technical language skills and help them learn to dress appropriately for work. Learners use real-life examples to develop their knowledge of the world of work. For example, teachers encourage learners on beauty courses to focus on improving their speaking and listening skills when carrying out consultations with clients.
- Learners at Dartford, Bexley and Waterlooville benefit from additional activities that improve their industry skills. For example, performing arts learners attend practical lessons on physical theatre and stage combat. They develop their audition techniques and attend shows to extend their knowledge of repertoire. Beauty learners attend exhibitions and masterclasses in make-up and skin treatments. Past learners return to talk to learners about the opportunities available in employment once they finish their courses. Learners on courses in the north of England do not have the benefits of additional activities like those learners elsewhere.
- Performing arts and fitness learners attend regularly, as do learners at centres in the north of England and at subcontractors K-Sports and Square Metre. Almost all learners attend punctually and are ready to learn. The attendance of a small minority of beauty and horticulture learners and those attending Walk Tall is too low. The actions taken by leaders and managers to improve their attendance have had limited success. Learners' attendance at English and mathematics lessons is not good enough and requires improvement.
- Learners develop good speaking, reading and mathematical skills during their courses. Most learn to use correct work-related language. For example, learners on beauty courses talk about contractions, contraindications and desquamation. They improve their knowledge of pricing treatments and mixing ratios. Performing arts teachers use professional language when teaching learners about performance. Fitness learners improve their knowledge of timing and measuring performance. Learners become proficient in developing the skills they need for employment.
- Managers have devised a wide-ranging tutorial programme which enables most learners to improve their knowledge of life in modern Britain. Teachers and learners discuss and debate enthusiastically topics such as democracy, tolerance and leadership. Learners research and devise detailed presentations on subjects such as sexism, gender reassignment and the dangers of smoking and alcohol. Teachers help them discuss and develop their learning around these topics effectively. However, adult learners on courses in Durham, Hull, Manchester and Oldham do not have a tutorial programme. As a result, they do not develop their knowledge in the same way that learners in the south of the country do.
- Learners know how to keep themselves safe. They understand safe working practices. During induction, learners discuss a wide range of topics with a strong emphasis on learning how to stay safe online. Teachers illustrate well the reality of online chatrooms, cyber bullying and bogus emails to help learners recognise potentially dangerous situations.
- Learners can identify situations which may be dangerous for them. For example, learners on beauty courses know about the potential dangers of providing beauty treatments in



people's homes. Performing arts learners understand how to use their phones safely and to protect themselves when travelling.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- Most learners at RTA complete their courses and achieve their qualifications. Almost all learners taking courses in fitness, beauty and performing arts achieve. Learners taking English and mathematics functional skills qualifications achieve particularly well.
- Almost all learners on performing arts and fitness courses, and at subcontractors K-Sports, Square Metre and Walk Tall, stay on their courses to complete their qualifications. However, fewer learners stay until the end of courses in beauty therapy and beauty therapy massage courses. Retention of current learners is high, apart from at Creative Learning Partners.
- The vast majority of adults and most study programme learners passed their vocational qualifications in 2017/18. Pass rates at Square Metre and Creative Learning Partners are high. However, pass rates for the very small number of learners at Walk Tall who have already taken qualifications this year are low.
- Learners on performing arts courses produce practical work and written assignments of a very high standard. Fitness and horticulture learners produce good-quality work. Although learners on beauty courses in Manchester and Oldham produce practical work that meets the required standards of their qualifications, the standard is not as high as that of beauty learners in Dartford, Bexley and Waterlooville.
- Current learners studying fitness qualifications in Durham and Hull and performing arts learners in Dartford make good progress with completing their qualifications. Those studying beauty courses in Manchester and Oldham enjoy their learning, but are making slow progress in completing their qualifications. Learners in centres in the south make expected progress.
- Leaders and managers track learners' progression between different levels of study in detail. Very high numbers of learners on level 2 beauty courses move on to level 3 courses with RTA. Almost all performing arts and fitness learners move to higher levels of learning with RTA on completing their courses.
- Most learners move into employment in their industry at the end of their studies. In 2018, almost all leavers on level 3 fitness courses and beauty courses in Waterlooville continued to employment within their industry. High numbers of performing arts learners continue to work in performing arts a year after they have left RTA. However, only around a third of learners who leave level 3 beauty courses in Dartford continue in employment in their trade.
- Staff support the very small number of learners in horticulture, most of whom have complex needs, very effectively with their next steps. Almost all continue to higher levels of learning with RTA or full-time employment at the Reynolds Retreat in Borough Green.
- High numbers of learners studying English and mathematics functional skills achieve their qualification at the first opportunity. However, the number of learners who gain high grades in GCSE English and mathematics is very low and requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers accurately identify gaps in achievement between different groups



of learners and plan to close them. However, they have not been successful in reducing the gap in achievement between 16–18 year-old male and female learners, which has existed for two years.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Around 100 learners follow study programmes, with learners studying performing arts, beauty, fitness and horticulture courses at levels 1 to 4. Those who need to study English and mathematics take these qualifications alongside their main programmes. Performing arts courses at levels 3 and 4 are taught at the centre in Dartford. Learners on beauty study programmes study at levels 2 and 3, mainly at Dartford but with a few learners at Waterlooville. The very small numbers of horticulture learners study at levels 1 and 2 in Borough Green. Around 30 learners follow sports and fitness study programmes at K-Sports, with six learners following a level 2 study programme at Walk Tall.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of what learners can achieve. They plan courses effectively to meet the principles of study programmes. They make sure that learners benefit from a thorough and informative induction. This improves learners' confidence and encourages them to interact with each other. Almost all learners who started their programmes in 2018 are continuing their courses.
- Learners on performing arts courses benefit from enthusiastic, energetic and challenging teaching from practising actors, singers and dancers. Teachers emphasise the importance of self-study and independent rehearsal. This prepares learners successfully for their next steps. Teachers on beauty and fitness courses use their up-to-date industry experience to motivate learners successfully.
- K-Sports learners improve their sporting skills well. Teachers plan lively teaching and coaching lessons which stimulate and interest learners. Learners develop their knowledge of how anatomy affects sporting prowess well. Those at Walk Tall produce work of a high standard and benefit from clear and effective feedback that enables them to understand how they can improve.
- Learners on horticulture courses enjoy their practical learning. They develop useful gardening skills and learn how to use power tools safely. Teachers plan sensibly and realistically to support those with education, health and care plans. Learners improve their confidence and become well prepared for their next steps.
- Almost all learners make good progress with their vocational qualifications. Learners know their achievements to date and their target grades. Teachers prepare those studying functional skills effectively for their examinations. Large numbers pass these qualifications at their first attempt. However, the progress of those studying GCSE English and mathematics is too slow, with too few learners achieving high grades despite repeated attempts at the examination.
- Learners improve their skills and employability prospects by attending a wide range of extra courses. Sports, fitness and beauty learners attend outdoor training, massage therapy tuition and spin classes. Learners at K-Sports complete work experience placements that enable them to gain Football Association level 1 coaching badges. Horticulture learners visit Kew Gardens to enable them to understand the maintenance of

large gardens. Performing arts learners attend a variety of shows and concerts to develop their knowledge of professional practice. These courses develop learners' industry knowledge admirably and prepare them effectively for employment.

- Study programme learners benefit from high-quality external work placements at professional theatres, gymnasiums, beauty salons and gardens. These prepare them well for their careers. Learners develop their confidence and interview skills by meeting formally with employers before their placements. Employers contact staff quickly if learners do not attend. Employers and learners evaluate the progress that they make on work placements effectively.
- In a few lessons, teachers too readily provide solutions and answers to learners' questions. They do not require learners to think carefully or research information to help them arrive at their own conclusions. A few teachers rely too heavily on learners copying information without exploring adequately the context and meaning of the topic.

## Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- Just over 180 adult learners follow courses with RTA. Most study beauty and fitness courses, with a small proportion studying on short entry-level English and mathematics courses with a subcontractor. Around half study in Dartford, Bexley and Waterlooville, with the rest studying with subcontractors or in centres in Durham, Hull, Manchester and Oldham.
- Achievement rates for adult learners are high. Most learners make at least the progress expected of them. The vast majority of those studying beauty and sports and fitness stay until the end of their programmes and all of those studying at Square Metre complete their courses. Almost all of those who complete their entry-level English and mathematics courses with Creative Learning Partners pass their qualifications, but too many leave their course before their examination.
- Learners develop the personal, social and employment skills to enable almost all of them to move on to the next level of qualification or into employment. Teachers help them gain the practical and customer-care skills they need to work professionally.
- Teachers help most learners to develop the subject-specific skills that they need for employment, particularly as a self-employed worker. Teachers develop and improve the way that learners question clients during consultations. They help them understand the need to create detailed and confidential records. They make sure that learners consider the differing needs of clients.
- Learners take pride in their work. Their confidence in their own skills and abilities increases rapidly. Most develop a real passion for their studies in beauty therapy or sports and fitness. They value the skills and knowledge that they develop, which helps them to become professional therapists and coaches.
- Teachers support and challenge learners well. They identify quickly those who struggle with their studies and help them catch up. They prepare detailed plans to support learners who have fallen behind through ill-health or family concerns and make sure they succeed.
- Teachers help learners on short entry-level English and mathematics courses effectively to understand and develop basic literacy and numeracy concepts. They provide good

support to learners who have been out of education for long periods of time to develop their skills and achieve their qualifications.

- Learners on courses in the south often produce practical work that is of a professional quality. Fitness and beauty learners in the north produce work that enables them to achieve their qualifications. Most teachers in Dartford, Bexley and Waterloooville provide highly effective oral and written feedback to learners that enables them to refine and improve their work quickly. Feedback to learners in the north is perfunctory and gives too little insight into how they might improve their written work or practical skills further.
- Teachers place too little emphasis on improving learners' writing skills. The feedback that teachers provide on written work does not indicate how learners who sometimes struggle with spellings and meanings of new vocabulary can improve their knowledge.
- Most adults, apart from those in Waterloooville, have only a basic knowledge of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism. Although learners cover this topic during induction, teachers in other locations do not check and expand learning sufficiently in subsequent lessons.
- Leaders and managers do not always plan the introduction of new programmes for adults carefully enough. For example, a fitness programme was recently introduced in Hull even though almost all learners who attend live many miles away in Stoke-on-Trent.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	54916
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	370
CEO	Amanda Tooms-Peel
Telephone number	01322 275807
Website	<a href="http://www.reynoldsgroup.co.uk/training">www.reynoldsgroup.co.uk/training</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	68	26	47	68	63	6	6
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	1	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	2							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	K-Sports Walk Tall Square Metre Creative Learning Partners Ltd							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Tricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barrett-Mold	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector

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