

ETEC (Sunderland) Ltd

Inspection date

21 August 2008

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory
Grade 4 Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Construction, planning and the built environment
- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

- 1. ETEC (Sunderland) Ltd (ETEC) was established in 1998 to work with difficult to reach and often disengaged people. ETEC operates out of three different sites in the East End and Hendon area of Sunderland.
- 2. ETEC provides training programmes for apprentices, entry to employment learners (E2E), adult and community learning and **learndirect**. ETEC contracts directly with Tyne and Wear LSC to deliver apprenticeships in construction, business administration and information and communication technology (ICT). The E2E programme is subcontracted from a local training provider Springboard. It also has a small number of adult and community learners contracted in from the local authority and a small Ufi **learndirect** contract mainly to deliver information technology and skills for life training. ETEC currently has eight adult and community learners, 36 apprentices, 90 **learndirect** and 47 E2E learners. Most of ETEC's income is generated through government funded programmes. The scope of this inspection did not include the small numbers of ICT and business administration learners.
- 3. Sunderland has a working population of 176,300. The East End and Hendon has an unemployment rate of 14%. The achievement of five GCSEs at grades A*-C is significantly below the national rate of 61.5% and of the Sunderland area at 41%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2			
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2			
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2			
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2			
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2			
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2			

Sector subject areas

Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards and the quality of provision are good. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

- 5. ETEC demonstrates a good overall capacity to improve. Success rates across all areas have improved over the last three years. Improvements since the previous inspection have increased E2E progression rates into apprenticeships. Apprenticeship success rates have improved significantly as have the success rates of learners with previously low attainment. Learners are now better matched to their programme and fewer leave the programme early. Key skill pass rates are excellent. Nearly all the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been resolved. ETEC has developed particularly strong support arrangements that include very effective welfare and pastoral support and a skills for life strategy that supports the development and progression of all learners.
- 6. Self-assessment arrangements are good. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report provides an accurate assessment of the provision. Management information is used extensively in the report to support judgements. ETEC has closely linked the self-assessment report to actions in the quality improvement plan, which is monitored regularly by the quality improvement team. Inspection findings matched most of the judgements and the grades in ETEC's self-assessment report.

Key strengths

Good progress in improving success rates

- Very effective skills development and progress for learners with previously low attainment
- Good key skills teaching and learning
- Very effective learner support
- Excellent community project work
- Strong strategic management
- Wide range of productive partnerships and community links
- Very effective widening participation practices

Key areas for improvement

- Some ineffective target-setting and activity planning
- Insufficient co-ordination between some aspects of provision
- Low achievement of E2E personal objectives
- Insufficient work-placements for E2E learners
- Some weak features of business planning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

- 7. Success rates across ETEC's provision are good. This was not fully recognised in the self-assessment report. Over the last three years ETEC has responded well to some significant challenges, including the loss of a number of key teaching staff. Throughout this period ETEC has continued to recruit its learners from areas of high levels of deprivation within Sunderland. Most of ETEC's learners require additional learning support. Within this difficult context ETEC has improved its apprenticeship overall success rates from 33% in 2004/05 to 74% in 2006/07, significantly above the national rate. In-year data for 2007/08 shows a success rate of around 60%. Apprenticeship timely success rates have followed a very similar pattern over this same period. Key skills achievement rates are high and many learners achieve at a level higher than required for their apprenticeship.
- 8. E2E success rates have improved from 30% in 2005/06 to 57% so far in 2007/08. The progression rates from E2E onto other programmes and into work have also improved from around 50% in 2006/07 to 60% so far in 2007/08. Over 60% of all construction apprentices have progressed from the E2E programme. However, learners' achievement of personal objectives is low at 57%.
- 9. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory with some very good standards of work demonstrated during the construction community project work. No significant difference in success rates occur between different types of learner. **learndirect** skills for life success rates are good and have improved from 71% in 2006/07 to 75% so far in 2007/08.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

- 10. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Teaching of key skills is good. Key skills teachers ensure that the learning complements the vocational training and pass rates are high. New teaching staff are supported well by ETEC's more experienced tutors. This support has helped ETEC maintain satisfactory teaching and a good standard of learning. Many apprentices achieve higher levels of key skills than required and many learners across ETEC achieve additional and relevant qualifications. On-the-job training in construction is effective and the community projects provide good training and realistic work experience for learners. Off-the-job training is well planned but some theory sessions are insufficiently challenging for the more able learner.
- 11. Learner progress is generally satisfactory. All progress reviews are closely monitored by ETEC staff. Assessments are well planned and thorough. However, target-setting within some construction reviews is too general. E2E reviews often lack employer input and have insufficient links between the monitoring of learners' progress and learners' weekly planning sheets. ETEC has good arrangements to identity and improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills.
- 12. Programmes and activities are good at meeting the needs and interests of learners. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Most apprentices progress quickly into employment. Those completing without securing work are employed by ETEC until they acquire a job. ETEC makes good use of external partners to meet the needs and interests of learners. Productive employer links, good support and effective jobsearch activities enable most learners to seek and gain work. Progression to apprenticeships for learners on the E2E routeway programme is good. Community projects provide very effective training

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

and realistic work experience for learners, although placements for E2E learners are insufficient.

- 13. Visiting specialist staff support learners' understanding of employment opportunities, issues of racism, sexual health, budgeting and healthy eating. Learners' confidence and team building skills are enhanced through the many sporting and community events arranged by ETEC and its partners. ETEC are quick to refer their E2E learners to other consortium members to meet the learners' vocational choices. Where learners have personal, behavioural or cultural requirements that restrict occupational pathways, ETEC's strong links with community projects provides meaningful placements.
- 14. Arrangements for learner guidance and support are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Information, advice and guidance are effective and support learners in making vocational choices. In construction, learners can sample different trades before they choose a craft area. ETEC provides all its learners with particularly good personal and welfare support. ETEC uses specialist mentors to support learners recovering from substance misuse, domestic violence and homelessness. The very effective support for literacy and numeracy across ETEC allows most learners to make very good progress. Learning is highly personalised and very effective at overcoming personal barriers to learning. Specialist support is available within ETEC and good use is made of external agencies when required. For many learners the achievement at ETEC is their first educational attainment.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

- 15. Leadership and management are good. This was identified in the self-assessment report. ETEC has strong strategic leadership and management. The management of sector subject areas is satisfactory and new curriculum managers are supported well by middle management while their skills and confidence develop. The management of ETEC's provision is strongly supported by a range of strategies and policies that are all focused on staff and learner development. ETEC has a board of directors that provide clear guidance and challenge. Most ETEC learners have low levels of attainment from school, many were excluded and most have some form of additional learning support need. ETEC has a highly successful vision to support these learners to raise their aims and succeed.
- 16. ETEC has a wide range of productive partnerships and community links. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Its work with other organisations to develop partnerships and consortium membership has allowed ETEC to blend a range of complex funding streams to fulfil and support its learners, staff and its community based provision. ETEC, through its partnership working and through its own initiatives provides access and progression routes that strongly support individuals personal progression aims, social cohesion and regeneration.
- 17. ETEC has very effective support arrangements, as identified in the self-assessment report. ETEC is good at providing all learners, staff and the local community with a coherent and successful range of support strategies. This includes support for employment, a well established skills for life strategy that is very effective in identifying and supporting all learners, good access routes for all programmes that encourage and are successful in

- supporting progression from level to level and into work, and very effective personal, pastoral, specialist and welfare support.
- 18. Performance management and monitoring arrangements are satisfactory. ETEC staff use reliable and accurate data to monitor strategic objectives and learner progress. Staff appraisals link to personal development. However, appraisals do not use information about the performance of staff in classrooms and workshops to support the monitoring process. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory. The arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory and they lead to improvements in the provision overall. For example feedback from learners has helped to improve induction. However, the five 'action groups' that review different aspects of the provision overall do not have a sufficiently clear focus on quality improvement and learner impact.
- 19. The self-assessment process has improved and is now good with new arrangements in place to improve the inclusion of all key partners more effectively. Inspection findings matched most grades and judgements in the report. Resources are satisfactory overall. Investment into information learning technology and new computers has been good. However, some computers are slow and staff are not yet fully using the new teaching and learning technologies for the benefits of learners.
- 20. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. ETEC has provided all staff with general awareness raising about child protection and the care of vulnerable adults. All senior staff have undergone training in these matters. All staff are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and ETEC has linked closely with specialist agencies to develop its policies on these matters.
- 21. Some aspects of business planning are weak. This was not fully identified in the self-assessment report. ETEC's business plan does not ensure its **learndirect** provision is sufficiently well promoted. ETEC has not fully met its recruitment targets for 2006/07. Staff participate in extensive training and development activities. However, no clear annual plan is in place that outlines ETEC's training priorities, their cost and what impact the training will have on success rates.
- 22. Equality of opportunity is good; in particular ETEC has very effective widening participation practices, as identified in the self-assessment report. It has a range of policies that ensure equality and diversity is promoted well at learner reviews and through induction. ETEC staff support these polices and respect diversity in all their work. ETEC has extensive experience and success in delivering its overall mission to improve life chances for local people and contribute to better social cohesion through providing employment and training opportunities and through innovative community based initiatives. It has links with most agencies that aim to meet the needs of the disadvantaged. ETEC recruits its learners from areas with high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. Most of ETEC's learners have low academic prior attainment and few aims. ETEC is very successful in breaking down these barriers and supporting learners to succeed and progress.

What learners like:

- The well structured and individualised training provided
- The friendly and supportive staff
- 'The additional training and qualifications I have achieved'
- 'I feel comfortable and valued'
- 'They supported me to resolve some personal problems'
- 'Nothing is too much trouble for them'
- 'The experience I have gained through the community projects'
- 'They helped me to achieve my first ever qualification'
- 'The new skills I have learned have helped me start an apprenticeship'

What learners think could improve:

- The shortage of tutors for a long period of time
- The training should be more realistic in the training centre
- The tools need to be better maintained
- 'Some computers are a bit slow'
- Theory teaching has been slow coming and is a bit basic
- 'I would like a more relevant work placement'

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: Grade 2

Context

23. ETEC provides E2E and apprenticeship training in construction, with currently 30 apprentices following bricklaying, wood occupations and painting and decorating programmes. Currently 38 learners are on the E2E routeway programme who take construction as part of their vocational studies. On-the-job training for apprentices takes place with employers or through community projects. Off-the-job training is delivered through day release at ETEC's training centre. E2E learners spend up to three days per week in the training centre where they take basic skills, personal and social development and vocational studies. Some routeway learners have placements with employers or gain work experience on the community projects.

Strengths

- Very good progress in improving overall success rates
- Very effective skills development and progress for learners with previously low attainment
- Good key skills teaching and learning
- Excellent community project work
- Very effective learner support

Areas for improvement

- Weak target-setting within learner progress reviews
- Insufficient co-ordination between some aspects of the provision

Achievement and standards

- 24. Very good progress has been made in improving success rates on apprenticeship programmes. Apprenticeships overall success rates have significantly improved from 14% in 2004/05 to 89% in 2006/07, which was well above the national rate. Timely success rates improved at a similar rate over the same period. However, in the current year to date overall success rates have dipped to 67%, which is still 5 points above the national rate for 2006/07. Timely success rates have declined and are now low at 25%. Retention and achievement of learning aims on the E2E programme is satisfactory. Learners' work is satisfactory, with some learners producing good standards during community projects. Learners' portfolios contain a good range of well referenced evidence, supplemented with photographic evidence.
- 25. A high proportion of ETEC learners have very low levels of attainment from school and a significant number were non-attenders or excluded. However, the very effective applied learning and high levels of support effectively engage learners and raise their aims. Learners develop good occupational skills and make very good progress given their starting points. For many learners the achievement at ETEC is their first educational attainment.

Quality of provision

- 26. The quality of provision is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching of key skills is contextualised very effectively. Key skills tutors ensure that the learning is relevant and that it complements the vocational training. A range of learning activities enables learners to develop skills in communication and number relevant to their trades. Pass rates for key skills are high; a good proportion of apprentices achieve key skills at a level higher than the framework requirements. Teaching in construction is satisfactory. In the more effective learning sessions tutors plan their lessons well and make good use of learning resources to make learning interesting. In the less effective sessions tutors use questions which are undirected and too few changes of activities occur. Learners work well in practical sessions and they benefit from good skills development. Assessment is reliable and accurate. The direct observation of competence on-site is well established. Target-setting within learner progress reviews is weak. Progress targets are too general and are insufficiently measurable. Intermediate milestones are not set to enable learners to measure their own progress. Employers are not always involved in target-setting. Activity plans for E2E learners insufficiently link to review targets.
- 27. The programmes meet the needs and interests of learners. All apprentices eventually progress into full-time employment. Those completing without securing employment are employed by ETEC until they acquire a job. Productive employer links, effective support and good jobsearch activities enable learners to seek and gain work. Very few apprentices progress to advanced apprenticeships. Progression to apprenticeships for learners on the E2E programme is very good. An excellent range of community projects provide very effective training and realistic work experience for learners. Painting and decorating and minor building works are carried out in various community buildings and in social housing. The standard of work is of a high commercial standard. Learners take great pride in their work and communicate well with the clients. Learner's behaviour and conduct is exemplary and highly professional.
- 28. Support for learners is very good. Information, advice and guidance are effective. Accessing the E2E programme enables learners to sample all trades and gain useful skills which help them make informed decisions on their choice of apprenticeships. Ongoing advice and guidance enables learners to transfer between trades or join one of the community projects. Approximately two-thirds of learners are identified as requiring additional learning support. The very effective literacy and numeracy support provided has been effective in breaking down barriers to reading, writing and number work enabling learners to make good progress. Learning is highly personalised; tutors adopt very supportive coaching techniques to help learners to develop their understanding. Very effective personal and welfare support has enabled many learners to overcome personal difficulties in their lives. Good links with external agencies helps provide specialised support when required.

Leadership and management

29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff development is well targeted at identified needs. Internal verification is effective and ensures the consistency of assessment. Resources are generally satisfactory and are very good on the community projects. Workshops are adequate for the numbers of learners. Tools and equipment are of a reasonable quality but are not well maintained. Housekeeping is satisfactory but storage of materials in the wood trade area is poor. Staff shortages in wood occupations are now resolved but have disrupted learners' programmes and delayed progress.

- 30. Co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training is insufficiently developed. Employers are not routinely provided with a programme of in-centre training and they are unable to plan or structure learners work on-site to complement off-the-job training. Co-ordination between the vocational and key skills elements of programmes is not well developed. Vocational tutors frequently cover communications and numeracy within the training but this is not routinely used within key skills portfolios.
- 31. Risk assessments and monitoring of placements are thorough. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. Appropriate personal and protective equipment is worn in workshops and on-site. Health and safety and equality of opportunity are well promoted during learner reviews. Most staff have taken part in the self-assessment process and are familiar with strengths and areas for improvement within construction. The self-assessment report is suitably critical and accurately identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

32. As part of a consortium, ETEC offers an E2E programme for 47 learners, 38 of whom follow a construction pathway. Learners attend four days a week for at least 22 weeks. They receive literacy and numeracy support, vocational and employability skills training. ETEC also provides skills for life, **learndirect** and other vocational programmes for 98 learners.

Strengths

- Good individual coaching and mentoring
- Good arrangements to identify and improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Good links with external partners to meet the needs of learners
- Very effective range of personal and welfare support

Areas for improvement

- Low achievement of personal objectives
- Insufficient links between activity plans and learner progress monitoring
- Insufficient appropriate occupational work placements

Achievement and standards

- 33. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and improving. In 2006/07 progression rates for E2E learners were satisfactory at 51% but improved to 60% in the first nine months of 2007/08. **learndirect** success rates have improved well from 71% to 74% over the last two years. Around 66% of E2E learners achieved a qualification over a range of awards. The achievement of personal objectives has improved significantly over the last three years from 11% to 57% in 2006/07.
- 34. Many learners improve their very low literacy and numeracy levels at ETEC, 54% of **learndirect** learners improve their skill to the next level and 12% improve by two levels. Very few E2E learners are entered for literacy and numeracy qualifications. However, all those entered achieve at a higher than expected level and many of those progressing onto apprenticeships achieve higher than required key skills awards.
- 35. Learners develop good skills and improved confidence. Many participate in team building activities, develop respect for others and become more able to live and work independently. Many learners with behavioural, social and personal challenges benefit from the broad range of community projects. However, too many learners leave the E2E programme before completing the programme.

Quality of provision

36. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. The teaching of formal sessions is satisfactory. They are effectively planned with well

sequenced changes of activities. Some less effective sessions are insufficiently challenging and tutors do not check learners' existing knowledge. Individualised coaching and mentoring is very good. Experienced tutors provide supportive, individualised learning through small groups or individual support. Learners are valued, well supported and confidently raise queries and seek clarification. Tutors are willing to plan extra learning sessions within the centre.

- 37. ETEC has good arrangements to identity and improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills. All individual learning plans are informed by a detailed analysis of learners' initial and diagnostic assessments. Detailed records identify progress and provide monthly reports as learners complete basic skills tasks that reflect their occupational programme. A well qualified specialist team motivates learners who are keen to voice their improved confidence and ability to complete job applications and interviews.
- 38. Monitoring learner progress is satisfactory overall. Monthly reviews clearly record work completed and establish appropriate progress targets. However, links between the monitoring of learners' progress and learners' weekly planning sheets are insufficient. Many plans are completed retrospectively. Activities to support the achievement of targets agreed at review are not systematically entered. Learners do not use the plans well to record their progression feedback and guidance from tutors on how to improve practice and achieve outcomes.
- 39. Occupational placements for learners are insufficiently appropriate and meaningful. Only 37% of learners were placed with employers in 2007/08. Employers are insufficiently involved with the planning of learners' personal learning objectives. Employers have little understanding of how they can contribute to the achievement of personal objectives. ETEC has recently recruited a placement co-ordinator with responsibility to improve the access to and the involvement of employers in planning placement activities. However, it is too soon to evaluate the success of this measure.
- 40. ETEC makes good use of a wide range of external partners to meet the needs and interests of learners. Learners' confidence and team building skills are enhanced through the many sporting and community events arranged by ETEC and its partners. ETEC is quick to refer learners to other consortium members to extend the choice of occupational placements. Where learners have personal, behavioural or cultural requirements that restrict occupational pathways, ETEC's strong links with community projects provides meaningful placements.
- 41. Support for learners is particularly good. A specialist mentor working across the E2E consortium complements ETEC staff in providing very effective personal and welfare support. ETEC successfully supports learners recovering from substance misuse, domestic violence, homelessness and restriction orders. ETEC provide transport and where necessary, clothing for employment interviews. Staff have extended their support to accompany learners to court appearances and to mediate with and support the families of learners.
- 42. Learners receive appropriate information and guidance at all stages of learning. Induction effectively introduces programme content and occupational pathways. Equality of opportunity and health and safety is covered well with a range of appropriate additional questions asked during learners' progress reviews to extend their understanding.

Leadership and management

- 43. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teamwork and communications are good throughout the organisation. Monthly staff meetings are sufficiently focused on learners' issues and progress. However, an over reliance is placed on informal communication within the smaller E2E and **learndirect** teams. Quality assurance processes are sufficiently thorough. Progression and success rates have improved each year over the last three years from a very low starting point. Staff are well informed, have appropriate targets and access to management information systems. Statistical data is used effectively to monitor learner progress and evaluate performance.
- 44. Equal opportunities arrangements are good. ETEC provides good support to learners through well considered, individualised training. Learners have a good awareness of their rights and responsibilities. ETEC implements a zero tolerance policy towards discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- 45. The self-assessment is a sufficiently inclusive and critical process. ETEC accurately identified most of the strengths found during inspection but placed insufficient emphasise on some areas for improvement. The self-assessment report matched the inspection grades.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider **2004** to **2007**

Programme	End	Success	No. of	Provider	National	Provider	National
	Year	rate	learners*	NVQ rate	NVQ	framework	framework
				**	rate**	rate**	rate**
Apprenticeships	2004/0	overall	9	33%	51%	33%	39%
	5	timely	11	9%	29%	9%	22%
	2005/0	overall	12	50%	58%	50%	52%
	6	timely	12	33%	38%	33%	34%
	2006/0	overall	19	74%	65%	74%	61%
	7	timely	17	71%	47%	71%	44%

- * Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
- ** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by the provider **2005** to **2008**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005/06	116	30%	54%
2006/07	109	41%	50%
2007/08	81	57%	60%
(9 months)			

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

- * These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme
- ** Progression is measured in terms of learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

Outcomes on learndirect programmes 2006 to 2008

Learning	Year	Enrolments	Counted for	Success rate	Withdrawal rate
type			data	(%)	(%)
All sectors	2006/07	219	157	68.2%	10.2%
	2007/08*	337	257	75.9%	5.1%
ICT	2006/07	34	17	47.1%	29.4%
	2007/08*	62	16	87.5%	0%
skills for life	2006/07	183	139	71.2%	7.2%
	2007/08*	242	229	75.1%	4.4%
Business and	2006/07				
management		2	1	0%	100%
	2007/08*	11	2	50%	50%

Equality and diversity

2006/07	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/ Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	219	49	0	0	0	1	169
Completion rate (%)	90.4%	93.5%	0	0	0	0%	89.2%
Achievement rate							
(%)	71.3%	62.8%	0	0	0	0%	74.8%
Success rate (%)	68.2%	58.7%	0	0	0	0%	72.1%
Withdrawal rate (%)	10.2%	6.5%	0	0	0	0%	11.7%

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