

Newman University College

Initial Teacher Education inspection report

Provider address	Genners Lane Bartley Green Birmingham B32 3NT
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Introduction

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

Key to inspection grades

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

Explanation of terms used in this report

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

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

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

The provider

3. Newman University College works in partnership with a wide range of schools to provide initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in both the primary and secondary phases. The provider works in close partnership with local authorities in the West Midlands and a wide range of stakeholders including schools, children's centres, the Refugee Council and the Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership. Partnership schools have strong relationships with the provider through links in particular with secondary subjects or primary education. Over and above ITE the links with schools frequently include classroom-based research and the continuing professional development of practising teachers.
4. Deriving from its Roman Catholic foundation, the provider has a clearly stated ethos which is centred on Catholic values of tolerance and inclusion. It has a

strong commitment to widening participation and to supporting the needs of schools and local authorities in the region.

5. The provider also runs an employment based initial teacher training (EBITT) programme, which was inspected at the same time as the primary and secondary courses. Although there is a separate report for this training route, the close working relationships between the EBITT and the primary and secondary courses makes it possible for the good practice identified in all three routes to be shared.

A commentary on the provision

6. The following are particular features of the provider and its initial teacher training programmes:
 - the quality of central training which provides trainees with a wide range of teaching strategies and a good understanding of how children learn and develop
 - the way in which different elements of the training combine well to encourage trainee understanding of the links between theory and practice
 - the excellent pastoral support for individual trainees.
7. There are particularly strong features in some programmes that could be applied to other programmes or aspects of the provision:
 - the rigour of recruitment and selection procedures that could be applied in the secondary provision to ensure better retention and higher standards of successful applicants in particular subjects
 - procedures from other teacher training practice within the institution to ensure greater consistency in class teacher and mentor training for both primary and secondary routes
 - the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures within the institution to ensure improved school-based training for both primary and secondary routes.
8. The following recommendations should be considered to improve the quality of the outcomes for trainees:
 - ensuring that there is consistent practice across the partnership in the primary and secondary courses in setting clear and challenging targets for trainees, for example following observations of their teaching and at weekly meetings
 - ensuring a greater focus across the provision on monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality as well as the content of the provision
 - ensuring that primary and secondary improvement plans measure the success and impact of actions in relation to outcomes for trainees.

Provision in the primary phase

Context

9. The provider works in partnership with around 130 core and 270 extended partnership schools to provide ITE in the 3-7 and 5-11 age ranges. The undergraduate route leads to a BA or BSc (Hons) degree in primary education with QTS and the postgraduate route leads to a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) with QTS. In addition, the postgraduate route offers courses in global citizenship, teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and in teaching a modern foreign language in primary schools. The undergraduate route offers a three year course with the option of a further year to develop a subject specialism. At the time of the inspection there were 425 undergraduates and 140 postgraduate trainees.

Key strengths

10. The key strengths are:
 - the good or better progress that trainees make, relative to their starting points, and their very positive professional attitudes
 - the vision and quality of leadership and management, especially in anticipating local and national change
 - the good quality of central training in curriculum subjects and teaching methods
 - recruitment and selection systems which are successfully attracting and identifying trainees with non-standard qualifications who have the potential to be good teachers
 - the outstanding pastoral support for individual trainees and the good quality intervention strategies which effectively supports those who encounter difficulties
 - the cohesive nature of central training which ensures a clear link between theory and practice.

Recommendations

11. In order to improve the quality of training across the partnership, the provider should:
 - improve the consistency and effectiveness of school-based training by;
 - ensuring that all mentors and class teachers have received up-to-date training in order to fulfil their roles and responsibilities as prescribed in the partnership agreement
 - strengthening the way in which school-based training is monitored, to ensure greater rigour and improved impact on outcomes for trainees.
 - ensure that the criteria for allocating school placements identifies how the range of trainees' training needs are to be supported across school experiences.

12. In order to strengthen management's assessment of performance and the impact of action planning, the provider should:
 - ensure that improvement planning identifies clear success criteria that are measureable against outcomes for trainees.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

13. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good with clear indications that recent developments are becoming more securely embedded and that there is a steady trend of improvement. The outcomes for trainees on both the undergraduate and postgraduate courses are equally good with the percentage of those achieving good or better grades increasing to well over three-quarters, and the percentage being graded as satisfactory correspondingly falling by nearly half from almost one fifth during the last three years. Trainees display very positive professional attitudes. They have many strengths and common features of those observed during the inspection included the excellent relationships that they have with adults and pupils alike. Most trainees display very effective classroom and behaviour management strategies and use teaching assistants well to support the learning. Well planned activities are imaginative and trainees' good questioning skills and flexibility mean that they are able to adjust lessons to meet the emerging needs of pupils so that they make good progress. The best trainees show a good understanding of how to assess pupils' progress and use this information to inform their lesson planning.
14. Recruitment and selection arrangements are thorough and rigorously applied. Both undergraduate and postgraduate courses are popular with many more applications than there are places available. This is partly because the provider has a policy of widening participation and actively encourages applications from those with non-standard qualifications. Because recruitment procedures are effective in identifying applicants capable of becoming effective teachers, many go on to achieve outstanding outcomes. Using special events the provider actively and successfully encourages trainees from minority and unrepresented groups, such as males and those of minority ethnic origin to apply. Selection procedures are well designed to identify applicants' strengths and weaknesses in subject knowledge, confidence and their potential to teach. The involvement of partnership school staff in the process is a strength because they are well prepared and make a positive contribution to the process. Information gathered at selection, such as through literacy and numeracy audits, and extensive reading lists are used well to prepare successful applicants for their training. Withdrawal rates have reduced significantly over recent years and the percentage who withdrew in the current year due to academic failure has been very small overall. Employment rates are good with most of the previous year's trainees known to be in teaching posts.
15. The quality of training and assessment is good overall, with particular strengths in the central training which is delivered by experienced and well qualified tutors and specialists from within the partnership. As a result, trainees make

good or better progress, relative to their starting points, and outcomes are improving. The individualised nature of the central training and the excellent pastoral support is particularly effective in the early identification, intervention and support of trainees who are encountering difficulties or are at risk of failing. Central training in curriculum subjects and how to teach them is very effective with tutors consistently modelling good primary practice. Trainees comment, in particular, on the high quality training in mathematics and professional studies. The content and structure of the training is well designed to allow for cohesive links to be made between theory and practice. This is illustrated by the assignments and tasks which combine well with school-based training and allow trainees to develop a clear understanding of how to use what they are learning centrally in their own practice in the classroom. Central training is highly effective in ensuring that trainees have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of professional skills and understanding. There is a clear focus on broadening trainees' understanding of areas such as global citizenship and community cohesion.

16. The quality of school-based training is more variable. The most effective schools provide outstanding venues for training. However, this is not consistent. Although judgements on trainees' progress and achievement are accurate, targets for improvement resulting from lesson observations and weekly meetings can be unclear and do not always reflect the weaknesses identified in trainees' teaching. Mid- and end-of-placement reviews provide accurate judgements, but some written commentary lacks detail and is not evaluative enough, resulting in targets that are not sufficiently precise. The criteria for allocating placement schools are not sufficiently rigorous or transparent. Consequently although all trainees receive their entitlement of contrasting school placements, some placements do not fully meet their individual training needs. In turn this results in a lack of confidence in areas such as in the experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or of those whose first language is not English. Systems to track and assess trainee progress towards their achievement of QTS are accurate.
17. The provider is highly responsive to need and is flexible in ensuring that resources are used well to respond to trainees' requests. For example, additional workshops on using interactive whiteboards were organised when it became clear that this was an area where trainees lacked skill and confidence. Access to on-line resources is very good and trainees take full advantage of the support this offers to their training and classroom practice. Trainees have access to good quality resources, both centrally and in school, although there is some shortage of books in the library, especially when multiple copies are needed for work on assignments.
18. Provision across the partnership is good. Very close links exist between stakeholders, including schools and local authorities, and communications are excellent. School placement documentation for mentors and class teachers and partnership documentation clearly indicates roles and responsibilities and provides helpful guidance. Mentor training is of good quality but too many mentors have not attended recent sessions. As a result, some mentors are less

effective and, in some instances, those class teachers who rely on guidance from mentors are unclear about their roles and responsibilities. Visiting tutors ensure accurate judgements on trainees through joint observations, but opportunities are sometimes missed to rigorously monitor the effectiveness and impact of school-based training, for example by routinely observing mentor and class teacher feedback to trainees.

19. The provider is effective at promoting equality of opportunity and in valuing diversity. Careful monitoring of outcomes demonstrates that all groups of trainees make good or better progress and trainees say that they are exceptionally well supported, with particular attention being paid to their individual training needs and well-being. There have been no reported incidents of unlawful discrimination or harassment, and policies to address such issues are fully in place and comply with requirements. Central training to prepare trainees for teaching in a diverse society, for example through supporting those whose first language is not English, is good. The commitment of trainees and their very good awareness of the importance of celebrating diversity in schools is a strength of many, although some lack confidence in particular aspects of this.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

20. Both the undergraduate and postgraduate courses are very well led by the two newly appointed course leaders. They co-operate effectively to ensure a coherent approach towards driving up improvement and have a very clear vision for the future. As a result, outcomes for trainees are improving and, although they recognise that there are aspects of training and partnership that need further development, there are early indications that these are being suitably addressed.
21. The provider has effective systems in place to evaluate its provision and is using this data well to plan improvements. All stakeholders are routinely consulted, including schools, local authorities and diocesan representatives. Trainers and trainees say that they feel that their suggestions and concerns are listened and appropriately responded to. For example, the timing of the first PGCE placement was changed from September to October following suggestions from schools. Evaluations are suitably analysed and although this leads to the accurate identification of strengths and areas to improve, the provider recognises that the self-evaluation document was over generous in some of its assessments. External examiners' reports are detailed and helpful. They confirm the accuracy of the assessment of trainees' grades, identify where the training can be further developed, for example in the proposed new primary curriculum, and justifiably praise the strengths of the provision, such as the cohesive links between the theory and practice of teaching and learning.
22. Leadership at all levels shows an outstanding capacity to anticipate and drive change. This is because leaders are very reflective and demonstrate high levels

of commitment to ensuring that the provider makes a positive contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning both locally and nationally. They are highly effective in supporting and responding to local priorities such as local recruitment. For example, last year in one local authority almost a quarter of all its newly qualified teachers came from the provider and all completed their first year successfully. Numerous initiatives to support the local and wider communities are either contributed to, or initiated by the provider, such as the 'pathways into education' project which supports those pupils and their families who are newly arrived to this country from overseas. The providers' response to ensuring that trainees are aware of national initiatives such as the primary curriculum, in early reading, writing and mathematics and in e-safety is very good. A particular strength is in the central training in these areas, and trainees' satisfaction rates are demonstrably high.

23. Procedures for taking action to improve the provision are good, but the planning of this is somewhat variable. There are good features, but the long-term strategic planning is recognised by the provider as being not yet fully embedded, and this is partly due to the timing of the provider's improvement planning cycle. In the medium term, issues are clearly identified from evaluations and external examiners' reports. The improvement plans for both the undergraduate and postgraduate courses clearly indicate what actions are to be taken, by whom and when, what resources will be needed and how they will be monitored. However, although success criteria are included, they do not always provide a sufficiently precise indication as to how the impact will be measured in terms of outcomes for trainees. Core subject action plans are of good quality, but the broader curriculum action plan is not sufficiently specific about both its priorities and success criteria.

Provision in the secondary phase

Context

24. The provider offers teacher training at postgraduate level on four 11-16 courses covering the subjects citizenship, physical education, English and religious education. Also available at postgraduate level is a Key Stage 2/3 course for trainees to specialise in teaching mathematics, science, information and communication technology, English or modern foreign languages for pupils in the 7-14 age range. There are approximately 150 trainees in total on the postgraduate routes. There is a further Key Stage 2/3, course at undergraduate level providing teacher training in the 7-14 age range for information and communication technology or science. The undergraduate route is available as both a 3-year or 4-year course and there are approximately 120 undergraduate trainees.

Key strengths

25. The key strengths are:
- the good attainment and progress of most trainees
 - trainees' confidence in using a broad range of teaching strategies to engage learners
 - trainees' well developed understanding of their role in supporting the development of the whole child
 - effective partnerships that ensure all elements of training combine well to support trainees' progress.

Required actions

26. In order to improve the quality of provision, the provider must:
- increase the rigour of recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that all trainees recruited have the potential to be successful teachers
 - improve the rigour of self-evaluation to pinpoint areas for development and identify required actions more incisively.

Recommendations

27. In order to accelerate trainees' progress and improve their attainment, the provider should:
- ensure that trainees can confidently use a variety of approaches to assess pupils' progress
 - establish a more systematic approach to planning for and addressing trainees' development needs that is well matched to their individual needs
 - increase consistency in the use of high-quality developmental targets for trainees across the partnership.

28. In order to strengthen management's assessment of performance and the impact of action planning, the provider should:
- increase the rigour with which all elements of training are evaluated by placing a greater emphasis on judging the quality of provision and the subsequent impact on trainees' outcomes
 - ensure action planning focuses more sharply on improving outcomes for trainees so that success can be measured more accurately.

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

29. Trainees' attainment is good albeit with some slight variation between some routes and subjects. Generally, attainment is higher on the postgraduate 11-16 and undergraduate Key Stage 2/3 courses. Attainment data for trainees at the end of the course in 2010 indicates an increasing proportion of trainees are being graded good or better across most cohorts. Notable characteristics of good trainees include: their confidence in using a range of strategies and creative approaches to engage and motivate learners of different abilities and age groups; their ability to create a positive climate for learning in the classroom supported by effective behaviour management; their willingness to contribute to the wider aspects of school life and pupils' learning beyond the classroom; and their good awareness of how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
30. Aspects of trainees' professional skills that are not as consistently well developed include their ability to incorporate a wide range of assessment strategies in their teaching and their confidence in planning to support the progression of learners over a series of lessons. Trainees' competence in reflecting on their practice and the impact of their teaching on learners' progress is also variable.
31. Recruitment procedures have been improved and these changes are increasing the effectiveness with which the provider can determine a trainee's potential at interview. However, in recent years the effectiveness of procedures has been variable and withdrawals from the course have fluctuated over the last three years, peaking in 2008/09. All withdrawals are analysed carefully, and this year the vast majority are due to trainees' personal circumstances. The provider is strongly committed to widening participation and trying to ensure that the profile of trainees reflects the cultural and social diversity in the locality. However, in a small minority of subjects the interview process has been less effective in ensuring that all trainees have the potential to gain QTS. Consequently, each year a very small minority of trainees reach the end of the course and are not awarded QTS. The provider recognises that more refinement to the recruitment and selection process is required to ensure systems and processes are fully effective in identifying trainees' capacity to take ownership of their own professional development and how they will best be able to learn.

32. Before starting the course, an increasing number of trainees in subjects including mathematics, science and religious education are benefiting from subject knowledge enhancement courses to increase their confidence. Recruitment targets have been broadly met for most routes and subjects. There was a significant improvement in 2009 in recruiting to both the Key Stage 2/3 undergraduate science and Key Stage 2/3 postgraduate mathematics courses. The recruitment of minority ethnic trainees is above average. However, the provider has rightly identified that the completion rates for this identifiable group are below average and is taking steps to bring about improvement in this respect. Trainees' progression into employment at the end of the course is generally good.
33. Elements of the training combine well to support the vast majority of trainees in making good progress. The taught course is rightly valued by trainees, providing a good combination of theoretical input and practical ideas which they can take to the classroom. Training provides trainees with a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting the development of the whole child. Trainees also recognise how assignments support their development by allowing them to consider aspects of their professional knowledge and practice in more depth. The provider's tutors know individual trainees well and they are able to adapt centre-based training to meet trainees' identified development needs effectively. Tutors also liaise with school-based colleagues to help ensure school-based experiences complement the provider's provision. However, despite mentor training and school visits by provider tutors, the quality of school-based training is variable across the partnership schools, with a small minority of trainees' reporting differences in their experiences related to mentor skills, accessibility of mentor support and the quality of school-based training on whole-school issues.
34. Trainees' progress is systematically assessed and regular joint observations ensure school judgements regarding trainees' progress are accurate. Processes to support weekly target-setting and review are well embedded. Trainees generally receive detailed, prompt feedback on their teaching with a clear focus on classroom management, organisation of learning, and development of teaching strategies. Enrichment opportunities including international visits are very wide ranging, ensuring trainees have a good understanding of their role in contributing to the all round development of learners. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities to support trainees' progress because targets are sometimes focused on completing tasks rather than clearly identifying next steps and planning how trainees will be able to achieve them.
35. Resources are used effectively to support trainees in making good progress. Teaching rooms for centre-based training are well equipped allowing provider tutors to model interactive approaches to teaching and learning. Access to on-line resources is very good and the majority of trainees make good use of the learning platform to support their studies and share good practice with their peers. Resource entitlements for trainees on school-based experiences are clearly communicated across the partnership and the provider is effective in targeting additional resources where trainees need more help to make good

progress. Trainees with additional learning or physical needs are also well supported with assistive technology, carefully chosen placements and/or one-to-one guidance as appropriate.

36. School-based colleagues within the partnership describe communication as 'excellent' and confirm that there is always a swift response by the provider if concerns or issues are raised. Programme steering groups are effective in supporting partnership developments and there is a strong commitment to the partnership by both provider-based and school-based staff. Training for new mentors provides clear guidance on roles, responsibilities and expectations of all partners with mentors appreciating the opportunities to ask questions in subject groups. Some individual mentors and/or schools, for example those who are new to the partnership, also benefit from further on-to-one school-specific support to supplement centre-based provision. In a small minority of cases school experiences could be more carefully balanced to ensure that all trainees have access to contrasting placements that are well matched to their development needs.
37. The vast majority of trainees feel that pastoral support is very good, and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. They appreciate the accessibility of the provider's staff and are confident that any concerns that they raise will be listened to and addressed promptly. Trainees' preparedness for teaching in a diverse society is well developed through centre-based training particularly in citizenship and religious education. However, not all trainees gain first-hand experience of working in culturally diverse settings or teaching pupils with English as an additional language despite their placement in two or more different schools. The provider is looking carefully at the outcomes for different groups of learners and taking appropriate action where required but a rigorous assessment of the impact of its policies on equality, diversity and inclusion has yet to be undertaken.

The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 2

38. The provider knows its overall strengths and weaknesses in relation to provision and trainee outcomes. There is a strong emphasis on seeking trainees' views with module evaluations providing a useful regular insight. However, the provider recognises that more use could be made of trainees' views in evaluating the impact of specific aspects of training. To supplement trainee evaluations some course leaders are beginning to look more closely at trainees' performance in relation to the individual QTS standards to identify where training needs to be refocused and developed. The provider's own evidence is enhanced with external review although there is currently no formal mechanism to seek the views of former trainees and their employing institutions. Joint observations of lessons involving provider tutors and school-based mentors are useful in checking the accuracy of judgements regarding trainees' attainment. Similarly, provider tutors scrutinise trainees' files during school-based experiences to check that trainees' entitlements are being met.

However, there is an over-reliance on an informal approach which is not sufficiently systematic to ensure that trainees' development needs are being met: frequently the monitoring of school-based training does not provide an incisive evaluation of the quality and the impact of provision on outcomes for trainees. Consequently monitoring and evaluation are not yet sharply pinpointing all areas where practice is inconsistent or identifying precisely actions that need to be taken to improve outcomes for trainees.

39. External inputs using local expertise and partnerships with national organisations and agencies contribute effectively to trainees' progress, ensuring that the content of the taught course is keeping pace with national and regional developments. For example, all trainees have an increased awareness of issues related to the impact of mental health on children's performance following an input from an external organisation. Cross-curricular initiatives are also supporting trainees' progress well with English trainees teaching their peers in modern foreign languages how to use drama effectively to support pupils' learning.
40. Collaboration with local authority staff involved in supporting graduate refugees into teaching is helping the provider take effective action to tackle the lower completion rates of minority ethnic trainees. International links allow trainees in citizenship and physical education for example to gain valuable experiences in very different contexts to inform their teaching. More locally, trainees from all subjects and routes have opportunities to contribute to planning and delivering themed days and weeks in partnership schools; others are involved in supporting the regular delivery of extended-school activity. This extensive enrichment of the secondary course allows trainees to gain valuable additional experience and a very well-developed understanding of their role in supporting the learning of the whole child.
41. Programme leaders respond positively to new initiatives, resulting from both internal and external evaluations and national initiatives. Impact studies illustrate how variations in performance across the secondary routes have been appropriately resolved. For example, changes to the secondary educational professional studies programme have led to increased levels of trainee satisfaction compared to previous cohort evaluations. In addition, refinement of module content ensures that trainees have a secure awareness of current initiatives such as national developments in the 14 to 19 curriculum and the implications of national reviews. This on-going evaluation of training and the subsequent action of the provider is contributing to the increase in the proportion of trainees graded good or better at the end of the course. Similarly recent developments to the selection process have helped to improve trainees' completion rates. The introduction of subject knowledge enhancement courses and targeted marketing has also recently increased the provider's consistency in recruiting to target and supporting trainees' progress. Short 'taster' courses have helped potential trainees to identify gaps in their own subject knowledge. For example, in mathematics the course's focus on problem-solving helped participants to develop their confidence in the use of a problem-solving approach to classroom teaching.

42. Improvement plans are well designed and focus well on appropriate issues. They incorporate views collated from internal and external evaluations and contribute to achieving the provider's vision for the future of secondary and Key Stage 2/3 courses. As a result, outcomes for trainees are improving. However, because aspects of the providers' evaluation are not sufficiently incisive, some intended actions lack precision and are unclear. In relation to many actions, success criteria lack sufficient focus on improving outcomes for trainees and only a few success criteria are quantified. Consequently the scale of intended impact lacks clarity and success is hard to judge.

Summary of inspection grades¹

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

Overall effectiveness

		Primary	Secondary
How effective is the provision in securing high quality outcomes for trainees?		2	2
Trainees' attainment	How well do trainees attain?	2	2
Factors contributing to trainees' attainment	To what extent do recruitment / selection arrangements support high quality outcomes?	2	3
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	2	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	2	2
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	2	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	2	2

Capacity to improve further and/or sustain high quality

		Primary	Secondary
To what extent do the leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to secure further improvements and/or to sustain high quality outcomes?		2	2
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		2	3
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	2
How effectively does the provider plan and take action for improvement?		2	2

¹ The criteria for making these graded judgements are in the Grade criteria for the inspection of ITE 2008-11; Ofsted July 2008; Reference no: 080128.

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