

# University of Gloucestershire

## Initial Teacher Education inspection report

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Lead inspector	James Sage HMI

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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 partnership

3. The University of Gloucestershire provides initial teacher education (ITE) leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) in the primary and secondary age ranges. The secondary provision also leads to a professional or postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE). The primary provision includes undergraduate provision leading to a bachelor of education (BEd) qualification and a PGCE programme. Both primary programmes involve a very close partnership with schools and local authorities in the region. The secondary provision in the university is part of the Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership (GITEP); this is a partnership between the Gloucestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers and the university, with the close involvement of the local authority. A secondary headteacher chairs the GITEP executive committee, which gives the partnership strategic leadership. The secondary programme in the university covers nine subjects. The validation for the PGCE and overall quality assurance are provided by the university. This inspection report covers the university's primary and secondary ITE provision based in the university.

4. Secondary trainees spend most of their time in schools but attend subject pathway training every Thursday for the duration of the course. This subject-specific training is led by the subject leader in each subject, many of whom are school-based, although some are university tutors. In each school a training manager has overall responsibility for all training in that school; this is a key role in the partnership. Generic professional preparation training is provided in the university, with additional weekly training in schools. Trainees spend long periods in their parent school in the autumn and summer, with a lengthy period in a 'twin' school in the spring term. Parent and twin schools provide complementary experiences and there are close relationships between them.
5. In addition to the university-based provision, GITEP also offers two other QTS programmes: a secondary QTS programme in four different subjects through a school-centred ITE route, the Gloucestershire School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT), and a separately accredited employment-based route to QTS for trainees on graduate teacher programmes (GTP). In the SCITT, the model of training is identical to that offered by the university with similar subject pathways training. Trainees from the SCITT attend professional preparation training alongside trainees from the university. Many schools are involved in both programmes and do not differentiate between trainees from the university and the SCITT; the school-based training managers are responsible for the training in their school on both programmes. The programme leaders for the university-based secondary provision and the school-based SCITT programme leader work closely together on all aspects of the provision.
6. The GITEP GTP route covers the primary and secondary age ranges. Secondary GTP trainees attend both professional preparation and subject-training sessions alongside trainees from the university and the SCITT. School-based training managers are also responsible for these trainees. Primary GTP trainees benefit from training organised through clusters of schools, with input from the university.
7. All three partnerships, the university, SCITT and employment-based route, were inspected at the same time. There are separate inspection reports for the SCITT and for the GITEP employment-based route.

## A commentary on the provision

8. The following are particular features of the partnership and its initial teacher training programmes:
  - the strength of the partnerships between the university and schools and the close involvement of headteachers
  - the excellent relationships and communications between all trainers throughout the partnerships
  - the key role of the university in using its expertise in initial teacher education to provide secure management and quality assurance

frameworks that can be used flexibly to best suit different needs within these strong partnerships

- the effectiveness of the partnerships in identifying and meeting local and regional needs and the extremely high proportion of former trainees employed at all levels in partnership schools
- the close relationship between the different strands of provision and the beneficial impact of close collaboration on improvements across the provision
- the clear place of initial teacher education within a continuum of professional development within the partnerships and in schools
- the way in which headteachers understand and use initial teacher education as part of whole-school improvement and the impact this has had across the local authority.

9. The following recommendations should be considered to improve further the quality of the outcomes for trainees:

- using the excellent tracking and trainee monitoring systems to ensure that all trainees are set challenging and progressive developmental targets
- using the data generated by this system to monitor rigorously the impact of any actions and developments on the achievement of specific groups of trainees.

## Provision in the primary phase

### Context

10. The three-year BEd course has around 110 trainees in each cohort and the one-year postgraduate course has 140 trainees. Both undergraduate and postgraduate routes are for trainees wishing to teach 3 to 7- or 5 to 11-year-olds.

### Key strengths

11. The key strengths are:
- extremely robust and well-managed recruitment and selection procedures that have contributed to a marked improvement in successful completion rates
  - the impact of self-evaluation across the partnership on improved outcomes for trainees
  - the support for the personal well-being of all trainees
  - course planning that is highly responsive to local and national requirements and focused on improving the outcomes for trainees
  - highly effective, collegiate leadership
  - excellent communication and collaboration across the partnership.

### Recommendations

12. In order to improve further trainees' progress and attainment, the provider should:
- ensure that target setting and the tracking of targets are consistently good for all trainees, and that they provide high levels of challenge for those trainees with the potential to be outstanding
  - ensure that all success criteria in the written improvement plan are sharply focused on measurable outcomes for trainees.

### Overall effectiveness

Grade: 1

13. Trainees' attainment is good, and close to outstanding, on both courses. Over the last three years there has been a marked trend of improvement overall, particularly on the BEd course, and attainment is moving rapidly towards being outstanding. The overwhelming majority of trainees make at least good progress against challenging targets as a result of the good coherence and outstanding quality of the provision. There has been a significant improvement in completion rates on both courses and these are now above the national average. Employment rates are high and trainees are often employed in partnership schools.

14. Trainees are highly motivated and good, reflective practitioners who take responsibility for their own professional development; they evaluate their teaching well through the impact on pupils' progress and achievement. They are good at classroom and behaviour management and confident in managing and planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They can confidently apply theory to their practice. Trainees have a good understanding of relevant national initiatives, for example those relating to the assessment of pupils' performance. They are confident about exploiting opportunities presented by creative approaches to the curriculum. As a result of high-quality training, they understand the implications of Every Child Matters for their teaching and other work in schools. Partnership headteachers and mentors report that the overwhelming majority of the trainees employed in their schools are able to cope extremely well with planning teaching and learning across the full range of national curriculum subjects because they are so well prepared by the course.
15. While trainees have a good understanding of differentiation and the need to plan for individual pupils, a minority do not routinely apply this to their teaching. There is some variation in how well they use prior assessment and other information about pupils in their planning.
16. Recruitment and selection procedures have been improved since the previous inspection, as demonstrated by improvements in successful completion rates, and are now extremely robust and effective. Trainees make rapid progress from the outset because of careful analysis of their strengths and needs. A 'trackback' system means that trainees who are not achieving as well as their interview profile suggests they should are very quickly identified. Following this, appropriate and effective interventions are put in place to ensure trainees' performance is improved. The recruitment of minority ethnic and under-represented groups remains low, although this has improved on the PGCE course. The primary team has carried out some very useful research and as a result of this has built positive relationships with local minority ethnic communities; the team is in the process of analysing the career needs and aspirations of separate minority ethnic groups. The introduction of a peer support group for male trainees has had a positive impact on improving their retention rates.
17. The quality of the training and assessment on both courses is outstanding; the overwhelming majority of the trainees make strong progress throughout their course. For PGCE trainees, their time in school during the first few days of the course has a significant impact on their understanding of the challenges they will meet as teachers and builds their personal resilience. The training is consistently of high quality across the partnership, with mentors having a deep understanding of what is required. This is the result of good mentor training and initiatives such as ensuring that all who observe trainees teaching are equipped to evaluate subject knowledge and the application of this to teaching. Link tutors and mentors work together well to support trainees' progress. While in the majority of cases trainees' developmental targets are challenging, precise and carefully evaluated, in a very small minority of cases targets are not as helpful as they could be or tracked precisely enough; this, in part, has

prevented attainment from being outstanding.. Normally course leaders quickly detect when the training is below the expected level and intervene rapidly and effectively. A review of the target-setting process is also being undertaken.

18. There is a very strong partnership between the university and schools; this is a key factor in supporting the progress made by trainees. This partnership is underpinned by a comprehensive and well-written partnership agreement where the roles of all participants are clearly defined and set out. The course handbook is thorough and contributes to consistency and coherence across the partnership. Excellent use is made in the training of the expertise across the partnership.
19. Resources are targeted well to improve outcomes for trainees. For example, placements are available in two local special schools and a local school is incorporated in the central training; the latter is used particularly well to support training in information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Opportunities for trainees to work in schools where there are a high number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion who speak English as an additional language are used well. Additional link tutor visits are used effectively to provide rapid support if a trainee is experiencing difficulties of any kind. Trainees value the virtual learning environment for the ready access to course materials and also enjoy the online discussions with their peers which inform and further develop their learning. The enhanced placements at the end of the course provide additional opportunities for further research or development in a chosen aspect of teaching and learning, broadening trainees' knowledge and teaching skills and preparing them exceptionally well for their first teaching post.
20. Arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity are excellent. Trainees say they receive exceptional personal support and there have been no incidents of harassment or unlawful discrimination. Without exception they are extremely happy with the course, including school placements and the quality of training and support. While male trainees are in the minority, they feel valued and well supported. Those trainees with specific difficulties feel they get excellent provision. For example, a trainee with dyslexia was allocated a personal study skills tutor and had lecture notes printed on coloured paper to make reading easier.

The capacity for further improvement  
and/or sustaining high quality

Grade: 1

21. There has been marked and rapid improvement in trainees' attainment on both courses over a three-year period and it is close to being outstanding. There have also been improvements in retention and successful completion rates; these are now sustained at a high level. The provision is meeting regional needs extremely well, with many trainees securing employment in partnership schools and elsewhere in the region. These improvements in outcomes are the result of strong leadership across the primary programmes, careful



management and monitoring of developments, with a clear focus on the outcomes for trainees, and the constant striving for further improvement that permeates the partnership. Course leaders are also supported well by senior leaders and managers in the university.

22. A strong feature of both courses is the outstanding way in which course leaders, in consultation with all members of the partnership, anticipate, prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives. The reviews of the teaching of early reading and primary mathematics, and the implications of the Byron report on e-safety, are now fully embedded in both courses. The partnership closely monitors changes to the primary curriculum to ensure that the course is up to date and that trainees are fully prepared. Planned changes to the primary curriculum have been anticipated very well through discussions within the partnership about a more creative and themed approach to planning pupils' learning. Course tutors are well qualified and work effectively as a team. Their work has made a significant contribution to improving trainee outcomes; for example, the partnership's special educational needs joint initiative has been very successful in enabling trainees to plan effectively for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. Trainees have also benefited from the work carried out in collaboration with the local authority regarding the education of the local Traveller community.
23. Self-evaluation leads to an accurate and incisive analysis of the quality of the provision. Although the partnership's written self-evaluation document is cautious in its grading, this demonstrates lack of confidence rather than weaknesses in self-evaluation. Leaders and managers at all levels have an excellent understanding of the quality of their work and what to do in order to improve the outcomes for trainees. The annual improvement planning cycle includes rigorous self-evaluation that involves all partners. The analysis of data on the outcomes for trainees to support this self-evaluation is robust; incisive analysis pinpoints exactly what needs to be done to improve outcomes for trainees. The impact of any course developments is carefully monitored through this analysis; for example, staff undertook a recent comprehensive review of training in mathematics. External examiners' reports provide very useful feedback on aspects of the provision and are fully taken into account. Qualitative data are also used well and include the views of all in the partnership: trainees, course tutors, and school-based staff. This focus on constant review and evaluation permeates the partnership and is understood well in schools. The thoroughness and rigour of this approach have resulted in the significant improvement in trainees' outcomes over the last three years.
24. Improvement planning is informed well by the high-quality self-evaluation; it is robust and focused well on the priorities for improving the outcomes for trainees. Course leaders and the partnership are clear about the future direction of both courses, including why particular initiatives and developments have been selected and their projected impact on further improving trainees' outcomes. Improvements in linking the QTS Standards with subject-specific knowledge requirements have resulted directly from the self-evaluation. Evaluation has also been used exceptionally well within recruitment and selection. For example, research and analysis showed that performance in

English was a key indicator of success in teaching; this resulted in the English test used at interview being made more demanding. After selection trainees are given specific and well-focused advice on how to improve and their skills are audited regularly and rigorously.

25. The university is exceptionally responsive to ideas from trainees and to school-based trainers' suggestions for improvements to the course. Tutors respond rapidly to issues raised, often by telephone. Feedback from schools has led directly to improvements in the moderation procedures.
26. Improvement targets are reviewed half way through the year to ensure they are having the required impact on improving outcomes for trainees. However, in a few instances written targets do not reflect this clarity of thinking and success criteria are not sufficiently sharply focused on outcomes.

## Provision in the secondary phase

### Context

27. The partnership offers secondary training in the 11 to 18 age range in art and design, English with drama, geography, history, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, religious education and science. A small number of trainees, in mathematics for example, are trained to teach the 11 to 16 age range. At the time of the inspection there were 86 trainees on the secondary programme. A small number of trainees are on a flexible route.

### Key strengths

28. The key strengths are:

- the quality of the partnership
- the way in which the structure of the course supports trainees' progress
- the interrelationship of the training roles in supporting trainees' progress
- the commitment at all levels to trainees' personal and professional development, including the involvement of headteachers across the partnership
- the quality of the support for trainees' personal well-being
- the commitment at all levels of leadership to the continuous improvement of the course and the focus on improving the outcomes for trainees.

### Recommendations

29. In order to improve trainees' progress and attainment, the partnership should:

- show trainees how to plan better for individual students in their classes
- provide higher levels of challenge for those trainees with the potential to be outstanding
- improve further the quality of feedback and target setting for trainees
- use the trainee monitoring system to monitor more closely the impact of developments on specific groups of trainees.

### Overall effectiveness

Grade: 2

30. Most trainees make good progress and go on to attain at a good or better level. The partnership makes accurate judgements of trainees' achievement during the course, with a precise analysis of individual strengths and areas for development. Analysis of this year's data shows there has been a dramatic improvement in trainees' achievement from the previous year. The proportion of trainees successfully completing the course has increased and has been sustained at a level above the national average for three years. Employment rates are also at least in line with national averages, with a very impressive proportion of trainees securing employment, many in schools in the partnership.

31. Trainees establish good relationships with their classes and with other staff in their schools; they are confident classroom teachers with secure behaviour and classroom management. They play a full part in the life of their schools and are often highly valued. Trainees have good subject knowledge and understanding of subject pedagogy and can apply this to their teaching, for example by identifying steps in learning when planning for progression and determining learning objectives. Trainees are able to reflect critically on their own practice and progress, in many cases evaluating their students' learning as a means of evaluating their teaching, and they use this to take responsibility for their professional development. This reflection often helps them to make links between the different elements of training.
32. Because of the training and the time they spend in schools, trainees have a good understanding of recent initiatives in areas such as the assessment of pupils' progress and the social, emotional aspects of learning. The training also ensures that trainees fully appreciate the implications for secondary teaching of developments in primary education, such as in the teaching of early reading and primary mathematics. Extensive central training in professional preparation, and to some extent in subject pathways, means that trainees also have a good understanding of the issues around teaching in a diverse society. However, this has not fully influenced all trainees' practice. In the small number of schools which have an ethnically diverse student population trainees receive good training, but in others their understanding is not developed into effective practice. Trainees have a good understanding of the issues related to teaching students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, although a few are not able to apply this much to their teaching.
33. The weaker features of the majority of trainees' practice are related to the consistent application of higher-order teaching skills. While many trainees can discuss a range of strategies for differentiation and assessment for learning, they are not able to apply this consistently in their teaching. A minority of trainees do not plan carefully enough for individual learners.
34. The high rates of retention, successful completion and employment show that recruitment and selection procedures ensure that trainees are well suited to the course and have the potential to become good teachers. Recruitment targets are met and the partnership is increasingly able to select from a strong field. All cases of non-completion are analysed extremely carefully and there is no indication that any are the result of weaknesses in selection, training or personal support. The quality of personal support for all trainees is outstanding; this is one factor in the high retention rate. The secondary programme, with the use of a flexible route where appropriate, provides opportunities for trainees from different backgrounds to train as teachers. The partnership is successful in keeping such trainees on the course and they go on to achieve well. While the recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than expected, extensive good work is being undertaken to ensure that appropriate school placements and community support are in place for these trainees.

35. All trainees make progress as a result of the training they receive, and most make strong progress. Most trainees make good progress from the start of the course as a result of trainers using the information gathered through selection, audits and the first part of the course to set targets that help them to make progress straight away. This is helped by trainees spending time in schools early in the course, following a short period of induction. There is a strong focus on subject knowledge for teaching from the beginning the course and this has a significant impact on trainees' own teaching. There are no significant differences in the progress and achievement of trainees in each subject, although some of the most able trainees are not challenged as much as they could be.
36. The structure of the course makes a significant contribution to trainees' progress: the effectiveness of the parent/twin school model; the amount of time trainees spend in schools; the quality of the weekly subject pathways sessions throughout the course and the strong relationship between professional preparation and subject pathways. This model means that 'human resources' are by far the most important and the use of this resource is outstanding. The interrelationship between the programme managers, school-based training managers, subject leaders and subject mentors supports trainees' personal well-being and professional development well. Trainers are very quick to detect and intervene when trainees need additional support. Extensive use is made of joint observations with mentors, particularly by training managers, to provide quality assurance, moderation and training for mentors. Very good use is also made, in subject and professional training, of the expertise across the partnership. Schools are organised into clusters to ensure that best use is made of the skills and the diversity within each cluster. Headteachers are closely involved in the partnership, not least by taking responsibility for assuring the quality of subject pathways; this has a positive impact on the quality of training as well as on schools' commitment to initial teacher education.
37. Trainees' progress is helped by their ability to recognise connections between the different elements of the course. They can relate what they learn in professional preparation to what they learn in subject training and to other aspects of their work in schools. Good links are often made between the weekly subject pathways session and trainees' teaching, with trainees often taking full responsibility for this. However, this is not always monitored carefully to ensure the links are made.
38. Trainees' progress is carefully monitored through a QTS Standards tracker and the good use of a set of characteristics of trainees at different levels of achievement. An analysis of trainees' achievements midway through the autumn placement is used to provide an extremely useful benchmark that is then used well to monitor trainees' future progress against expectations. The excellent formative use of the grade characteristics at the end of the second, twin school placement gives a rounded and detailed view of the trainees' achievement; this is then used well to set individual targets for the final placement. This assessment also enables the partnership to carefully plan

interventions for those who need it, although this works more effectively for trainees graded as satisfactory rather than providing higher levels of challenge for some potentially outstanding trainees. The introduction of this monitoring system has had a highly significant impact on improving achievement and attainment.

39. Trainees are provided with extensive feedback on their teaching and are set targets for their professional development; together these contribute to the progress of all trainees. In the large majority of cases, the weekly subject pathways sessions effectively prepare trainees for, and build on, school experiences to help them achieve these targets. Many mentors use a good range of training strategies matched well to trainees' targets, including collaborative teaching and demonstrations, but this good practice is not fully embedded across the partnership. For a small minority of trainees, the feedback they receive and the targets they are set are not sufficiently challenging or there is no clear progression through the targets to ensure greater depth or breadth. The partnership has undertaken some highly innovative work with a group of higher-achieving trainees, such as the 'scaling the peak' initiative, but the high levels of challenge required for these trainees is not a routine feature of all the feedback and developmental targets.

## The capacity for further improvement and/or sustaining high quality Grade: 1

40. Over recent years there has been a trend of improvement in retention and successful completion rates and these are now sustained at a high level. The excellent way in which the provision meets the needs of schools in the region is demonstrated by sustaining high rates of employment in partnership schools. The dramatic improvement in the achievement of trainees since last year is in no small measure the result of the new leadership team and the impact of the changes it has made to the provision, supported well by senior leaders and managers in the university and the partnership. The strength of the partnership is an essential component of the provider's outstanding capacity to secure and sustain further improvements; an absolute commitment to continuous improvement, focused on the outcomes for trainees, permeates all levels of leadership and all aspects of the provision.
41. The partnership has fully anticipated and responded to all relevant external changes, with a clear focus on improving the outcomes for trainees. As a result, trainees are fully aware of the implications of changes to the secondary curriculum and all current developments in their subjects. Careful monitoring ensures that full account is taken of Ofsted reports into subject teaching and other aspects of schools, as well as initiatives from the Training and Development Agency for Schools. The partnership is also careful to implement change identified through analyses of its own work; for example, developing 'mentor voice' across the partnership and involvement in an initiative across many south-west teacher training providers to increase the recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic backgrounds. A number of schools in the

partnership are active in developing applied learning and are fully involved in 14 to 19 consortia; the benefits are shared across the partnership which has been successful in securing training places for 14 to 19 work next year. However, 14 to 19 education is not fully embedded in training.

42. The cycle of self-evaluation, improvement planning, taking action and monitoring the impact of actions to sustain and improve the outcomes for trainees is thorough and rigorous and underpins recent improvements in the outcomes for trainees. Self-evaluation is tightly focused on the analysis of the outcomes for trainees, takes full account of evaluations from all of the partnership and shows clearly what is working well and what needs further development. The absolute commitment of all headteachers to the partnership means that initial teacher education has an unusually high priority in schools. The high proportion of former trainees in partnership schools, with many now in leadership roles, provides a constant source of feedback and guidance. Subject evaluations and evaluations by schools feed in well to the overall self-evaluation. External examiners' reports provide detailed and useful feedback on key aspects of the provision.
43. Improvement planning is informed well by self-evaluation and by subject improvement plans, and is focused on key priorities linked to improving outcomes for trainees. All actions taken are monitored in terms of the impact on these outcomes.
44. There is a clear understanding of the Gloucestershire training model across the partnership, with excellent relationships at all levels and extremely effective communications. There is also absolute clarity about the role of each of the tiers of management and full representation for all aspects of the partnership; this provides a very strong framework for maintaining quality and for further developments. However, there is some variation in the quality of training across the partnership and some current developments are not yet fully embedded.
45. The system for monitoring trainees' progress provides robust data to analyse and monitor the impact of changes on different groups of trainees. However, the partnership has yet to develop a sharp process for using these data to evaluate in depth the impact of its key developments on the achievement of specific groups of trainees, as well as on the complete cohort, while maintaining the high quality of the relationships and the integrity of the training model.

## Summary of inspection grades<sup>1</sup>

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?		1	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?	1	2
	To what extent does the training and assessment ensure that all trainees progress to fulfil their potential given their ability and starting points?	1	2
	To what extent are available resources used effectively and efficiently?	1	1
The quality of the provision	To what extent is the provision across the partnership of consistently high quality?	1	2
Promoting equalities and diversity	To what extent does the provision promote equality of opportunity, value diversity and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination?	1	1

### 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?		1	1
How effectively does the management at all levels assess performance in order to improve or sustain high quality?		1	1
How well does the leadership at all levels anticipate change, and prepare for and respond to national and local initiatives?		1	1
How effectively does the partnership plan and take action for improvement?		1	2

<sup>1</sup> 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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