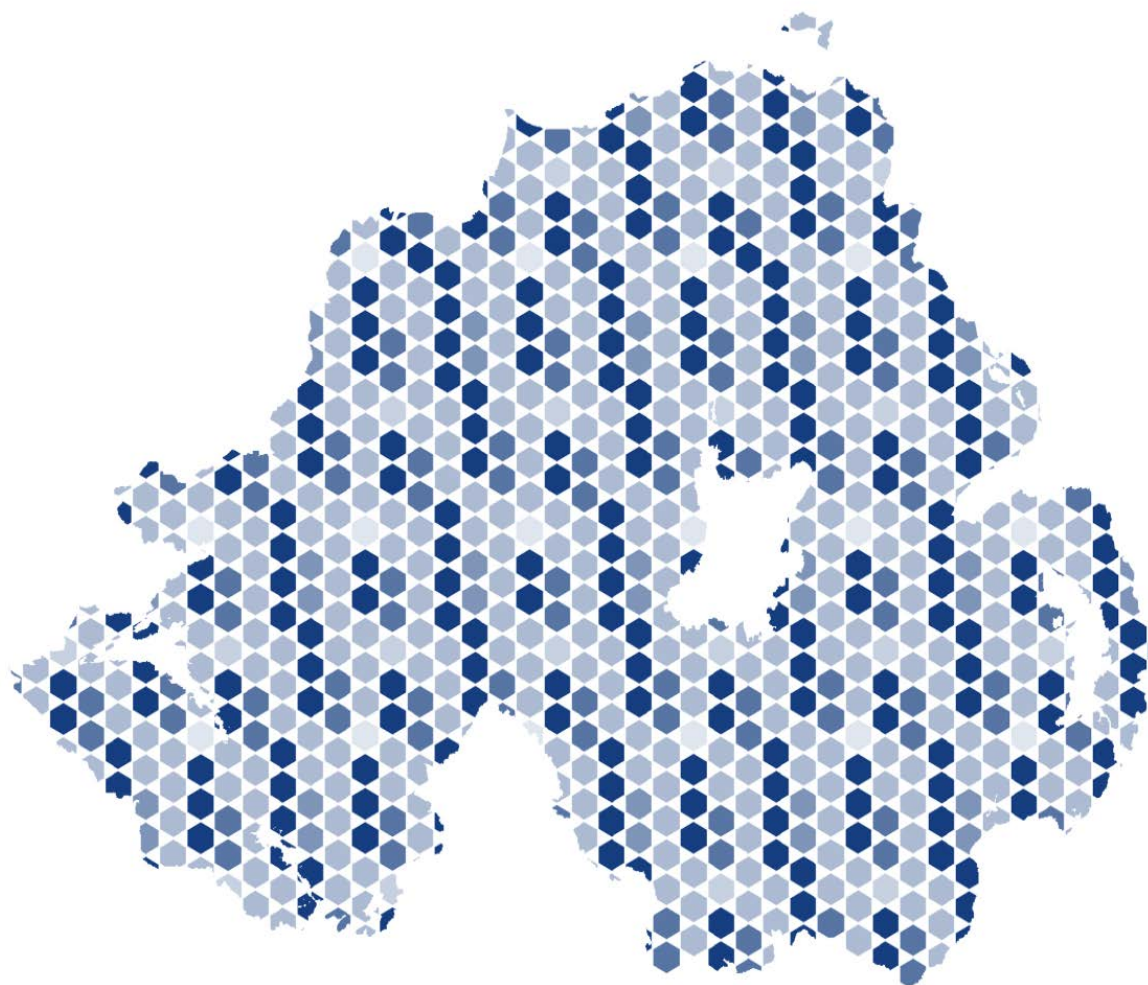


Education and Training Inspectorate

POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Ballycastle High School, Ballycastle, County Antrim

Controlled non-selective DE Ref No (321-0124)

Report of an Inspection (Involving Action Short of Strike) in January 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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INTRODUCTION

1. Context

Ballycastle High School is a co-educational, all-ability school attracting its pupils from the town and from the wider rural area. Since 2015-16, there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils requiring additional help with aspects of their learning. There has been a recent restructuring of senior and middle leadership due to staff changes. The school is in a long-established and successful shared education partnership with the adjacent maintained post-primary school, widening its provision at Key Stage (KS) 4 and post-16. The school is an active member of the Coleraine Area Learning Partnership.

Four of the teaching unions, which make up the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council (NITC), have declared industrial action primarily in relation to a pay dispute. This includes non-co-operation with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Prior to the inspection, the school informed the ETI that the senior leadership team would be co-operating with the inspection. The ETI has a statutory duty to monitor, inspect and report on the quality of education under Article 102 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. Therefore, the inspection proceeded and the following evaluations are based on the evidence as made available at the time of the inspection.

Ballycastle High School	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Year 8 Intake	58	70	82	54
Enrolment	411	395	412	403
% Attendance (NI Average)	92.5% (92.0%)	92.2% (91.8%)	91.1% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	30.9%	30.9%	33.5%	34.5%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	9.5% (39)	14.9% (59)	16.5% (68)	15.6% (63)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	19	18	22	20
No. of newcomers	*	0	0	*

Source: data as verified by the school.

N/A not available

* fewer than 5

2. Pupils', parents' and staff questionnaire responses

Thirty-one percent (123) of the pupils across all key stages completed an online questionnaire. Overall, the responses were very positive about their experience in the school, with the pupils appreciating, for example, the academic and pastoral support available to them, when needed, as well as affirming a view that the school is run well. Nearly one-fifth (23) of the pupils responding provided written comments, sharing their views of school life and their learning experiences.

A small number of parents (11) and staff (5) responded to the online questionnaires. Most of the responses to the parental questionnaires were positive about the life and work of the school, highlighting, for example, the strong pastoral ethos in the school and the school's good reputation within the community. The very small number of staff who responded to the online questionnaire indicated good levels of satisfaction with the work of the school.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Any issues raised in all of the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and the representatives of the governors.

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the quality of the provision and the overall outcomes for the pupils;
- the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and modern languages; and
- the quality and impact of the provision for care, welfare and support of the pupils.

Where it has been possible to evaluate aspects of the foci, they have been reported in the body of the report.

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Unable to assure the quality of education
Outcomes for learners	No performance level available
Quality of Provision	No performance level available
Leadership and management	No performance level available

KEY FINDINGS

5. Outcomes for learners

- The pupils who met with the inspectors were friendly and confident, reflecting the school's welcoming and inclusive ethos. The pupils develop leadership and inter-personal skills through a range of sporting, social and cultural extra-curricular opportunities, some of which are organised jointly with the adjacent post-primary school on a cross-phase basis such as: sport and youth leadership initiatives and musical events.

- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs, or equivalent at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, is consistently well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs, or equivalent, at grades A*-C has been above or in line with the NI average and those pupils entitled to free school meals attaining at this level has been above the NI average in two of the last three years.
- Attainment by the pupils in a majority of the individual subjects at GCSE grades A* to C² is in line with, or above the subject averages. It is notable that attainment in one-half of the individual subjects at grades A* to C is more than ten percentage points above the corresponding averages.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining three or more A levels or equivalent has increased from 51% to 73%, which is significantly above the NI average for similar schools. Attainment by the pupils in a majority of the individual subjects at GCE A level grades A* to C³ is in line with, or above, the corresponding subject averages.
- In 2017 most of the pupils in Year 14 progressed to further and higher education.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the standards attained by the pupils in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy; and modern languages;
- the progression in the pupils' learning; and
- the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.

6. Quality of Provision

- Through the Coleraine Area Learning Partnership but primarily with the adjacent maintained post-primary school, pupils have access to a wide range of general and applied subjects. The well-embedded collaborative arrangements that are in place with its neighbouring school provide significant benefits to curriculum choice and provide efficiencies and ensure viability and sustainability for running courses that benefit the pupils and support their academic and social development.
- At all key stages, the curriculum, which is kept under review, is broad, balanced and flexible and is being adapted to meet the changing needs and interests of the pupils. At KS4 and post-16 the pupils access a wide range of general and applied subjects. In particular, at KS 4, there is a consistently strong uptake of science, technology, engineering and mathematics related subjects with successful outcomes.

² In those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages.

³ In those subjects for which there are corresponding NI subject averages.

- The school has identified careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEAIG) as a priority area for development and is addressing appropriately the need to review CEIAG policies, practices and resources. For a minority of pupils, the school has identified that the outcomes achieved at KS4 indicate that the number of subjects taken may not always match their needs and abilities; it would further benefit these pupils to ensure the advice and guidance about curriculum options is meeting fully their needs, abilities and aspirations.
- The school is proud of its own ethos and recognises the significant additional benefits provided by educating all pupils together through its collaborative arrangements with its neighbouring school, including the establishment of a joint pupil council.
- In discussions with inspectors, the pupils expressed their pride in their school and spoke positively about their learning. They expressed their appreciation for the help and support they receive from the staff to enable them to succeed in their studies.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the impact of the curriculum;
- the effectiveness of the guidance and support in bringing about high quality individual learning experiences;
- the effectiveness and impact of planning, teaching and assessment in promoting learning;
- the quality or overall impact of the CEIAG provision;
- the quality of provision in English and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, and modern languages across the school; and
- the impact of care and welfare on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development planning process is well-informed by appropriate self-evaluation, including the use of a wide range of data and information from consultation surveys that the school conducts with its stakeholders. It would benefit further the work of the school to streamline the school development plan priorities. More robust baseline statements and measurable targets for the associated action plans across the school would further support tracking of the impact of actions taken.
- The senior leadership team have fostered a collegial working relationship. They communicate clearly a strategic vision for the school and the community it serves, with the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils and a commitment to developing the pupils to their potential at the centre of all decisions on planning, curriculum and resources.

- The governors are knowledgeable about the standards attained by the pupils and proud of the reputation the school commands within the community. They are highly committed to the collaborative shared education work and participate in joint working groups to promote this association further. They understand well their role in the school development planning process and support and challenge the senior leadership appropriately. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI was unable to evaluate fully:

- the effectiveness and impact of the senior leadership of the school;
- the effectiveness and impact of middle leadership; and
- the effectiveness of action to promote and sustain improvement.

8. Safeguarding

During the inspection, the school provided evidence that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils reflect broadly the guidance from the Department of Education. Appropriately, the school continues to review and update its child protection and safeguarding policies. Owing to the action short of strike, the ETI was unable to evaluate fully the outworking of the arrangements for safeguarding in the school. In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils reported that they feel safe and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

CONCLUSION

9. Overall effectiveness

Owing to the impact of the action short of strike being taken by the teachers, the ETI is unable to assure parents/carers, the wider school community and stakeholders of the quality of education being provided for the pupils. This will be reflected in future inspection activity.

Health and safety/accommodation

1. The risk assessments for class sizes in KS3 practical subjects are not fit for purpose.
2. The school needs to review the security arrangements around access to and within the school grounds.
3. During wet weather, water is leaking through the link corridors, which causes a slip hazard.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS⁴ and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Ballycastle High School achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band⁵.

The table also includes the percentage of year 12 pupils in Ballycastle High School achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent, including English and mathematics at grades A* to E. In this instance, there is no NI average available.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects</i>	98.15	100	100
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	83.33	68.18	70.49
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁶</i>	<i>72.3</i>	<i>68.5</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	61.11	50.00	54.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band</i>	<i>43.5</i>	<i>44.3</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	98.15	96.97	96.72
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	43.75	45.45	38.46

⁴ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁵ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁶ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

GCE A level and equivalent examination results at grades A* to C from 2015-16 to 2017-18

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Ballycastle High School achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	93.25	100	99
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	51.06	60	72.73
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals band⁷</i>	<i>46.7</i>	<i>51.6</i>	<i>N/A</i>

⁷ The benchmarking bands for 2015/16, as set in in Circular 2017/8 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting' are different to those used in preceding years; therefore, trend comparisons with previous years' benchmarking data need to be treated with caution.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level or equivalent

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

Grades A* - C

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 12 cohort	59	69	67

GCSE Subject or equivalent	Number of Entries	School A* - C%	Northern Ireland A* - C%
Applied Sciences	46	54.3	N/A
Art & Design	37	51.4	75.8
BTEC Agriculture	15	100.0	N/A
BTEC Countryside and Environment (BTEC/CE2_QA21)	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Countryside and Environment (BTEC/EC2)	22	100.0	N/A
BTEC Science (Vocational)	*	66.7	N/A
BTEC Sports Studies (BTEC/1&2_MA1)	14	100	N/A
BTEC Sports Studies (BTEC/EC2_MA1)	*	100	N/A
BTEC Travel and Tourism	*	57.1	N/A
Business Studies	52	69.2	60.7
Computer Use (Cambridge Technical)	*	33.3	N/A
Computer Use (DIDA/CE2_CN1)	31	35.5	N/A
Construction	16	81.3	N/A
Construction Studies	15	93.3	N/A
Design and Technology	43	88.4	70.5
Drama	*	71.4	78.1
English Language	181	68.0	67.5
English Literature	73	79.5	84.5
French	18	72.2	74.9
Geography	38	44.7	64.8
Health Studies (Cambridge Technical)	*	100	N/A
History	37	78.4	65.0
Home Economics	30	80.0	67.7
Home Economics: Child Development	32	62.5	70.0
Hospitality & Catering	15	80.0	61.3
Information Technology	13	100.0	71.5
Information Technology Vocational (NQF)	*	0	N/A
Mathematics	180	62.2	52.7
Motor Vehicle Studies	32	71.9	52.3
Music	12	75.0	81.3
Occupational Studies: Business Studies	*	100.0	N/A
Occupational Studies: Preparation For Work	39	59.0%	N/A
Polish	*	100.0	N/A
Learning For Life and Work	181	89.5	74.1
Religious Studies	132	65.2	65.1
Science Additional	50	84.0	76.5
Science Core	96	70.8	39.0
Science Double Award	46	80.4	83.4
Science (General/Combined) NQF	*	0	N/A
Science Single Award	30	50.0	70.0
Sport/PE Studies	17	64.7	70.1

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level or equivalent

(The three year average is expressed as a percentage of the pupils entered)

Grades A* - C

	2015 -16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of pupils in Year 14 cohort	49	40	22

GCE A level subject or equivalent	Number of entries	School A*-C%	Northern Ireland A*-C%
Applied Science	*	75.0	N/A
Art & Design	*	100.0	94.7
Biology	18	27.8	82.7
BTEC Agriculture	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Applied Sciences		*	100
BTEC Building	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Business Studies	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Childcare Skills	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Computer Use	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Multi Media	12	100.0	N/A
BTEC Sports Studies (BTEC/DI3_MA1)	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Sports Studies (BTEC/SD3_MA1)	*	100.0	N/A
BTEC Travel and Tourism	*	100.0	N/A
Business Studies (Cambridge Technical)	*	100.0	N/A
Business Studies	17	58.8	91.0
Chemistry	*	100.	88.5
Computer Use (Cambridge Technical)	*	100.0	N/A
Design and Technology	13	92.3	N/A
Drama	*	100.0	88.6
English Literature	16	81.3	84.6
French	*	20.0	90.8
Geography	*	100.0	87.4
Health & Social Care	28	96.4	86.8
History	18	94.4	84.4
Home Economics: Food	10	100.0	N/A
Information Technology (Voc)	13	38.5	86.5
Leisure and Recreation	*	100.0	N/A
Mathematics	*	88.9	88.6
Performing Arts (Vocational)	*	100.0	86.1
Physics	*	60.0	81.9
Psychology	*	55.6	70.0
Religious Studies	12	91.7	88.8
Science (Vocational)	30	100.0	68.9
Sport/PE Studies	*	66.7	77.8

* indicates fewer than 10 entries over 3 years

STAYING ON RATE⁸ 2017/18

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at school compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	49.5	50.7
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	74.2	75.9

Leavers' Destinations⁹ 2016/17

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter employment, further education, higher education, and training or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-grammar schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI No. (%)	School No. (%)	NI Yr12 (%)	School Yr12 (%)	NI Yr13 (%)	School Yr13 (%)	NI Yr14 (%)	School Yr14 (%)	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	12256	77		45		7		22			
Employment	1497 (12.2%)	3 (4.0%)	6.7%	*	21.9%	0	12.2%	*			
Institute of Further Education	5512 (45.0%)	35 (46%)	60.9%	29(65%)	49.2%	*	45.0%	*	7	20	5
Institute of Higher Education ¹⁰	2652 (21.6%)	16 (21%)	*	-	*	-	21.6%	16 (73%)	0	0	29
Training ¹¹	1924 (15.7%)	15 (19%)	28.0%	13(29%)	17.9%	-	15.7%	*			
Unemployment	448 (3.7%)	-	2.7%	-	6.4%	-	3.7%	-			
-Others	223 (1.8%)	8(10%)	#	*	#	*	1.8%	*			

Source for NI data: Destination of School Leavers by year group, 2016/17 - NON-GRAMMAR SCHOOLS¹²

- * fewer than 5 cases
- # figures suppressed

⁸ The percentage of pupils who stay on at school compared with the Northern Ireland average for all schools, this rate is calculated in terms of pupils who progress their level of study, whether at their original or a new school. Pupils that move schools between years are counted as 'staying on' at their original school as they are progressing their study within the school system.

⁹ Destination is defined by Institution. Institutions may provide courses at both Further and Higher Education levels.

¹⁰ Includes universities and teacher training colleges.

¹¹ Numbers entering training include those entering the Training for Success programme, operated by the Department for the Economy. Training on Training for Success is delivered by a range of training providers, including Further Education Colleges. Training for Success trainees who receive training at Further Education Colleges are recorded as being in training and not in Further Education. This convention avoids double counting of Training for Success trainees.

¹² Excludes special and independent schools.

Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework publication, which is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ISEF-Post-Primary>.

The arrangements for this inspection included: meetings with the senior leadership team, a meeting with representatives from the governors; formal discussions with groups of pupils; review of documentation and data; and the opportunity for all pupils, parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management¹³:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on governance:

High degree of confidence
Confidence
Limited confidence

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on safeguarding:

Reflects the guidance
Reflects broadly the guidance
Unsatisfactory

The ETI use the following levels when reporting on care and welfare:

Impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners
Does not impact positively enough on learning, teaching and outcomes for learners

¹³ And the overall provision in a subject area or unit, as applicable.

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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