



Inspire Education Trust

Together we achieve, individually we grow

Thematic Curriculum Policy 2025 - Primary

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Review Date: September 2026

Document History

Version	Status		Date	Author	Summary Changes
V1			Sept 25	M Thomas	New Policy

Theme Curriculum Policy 25 Preface:

Central Construction alongside Academy Adaptations & Contextualisation

A Centrally Constructed Thematic Curriculum:

At Inspire Education Trust our primaries have an aligned **curriculum framework** to ensure consistency, coherence, and high standards across all our academies. A trust-wide aligned curriculum designed by subject experts brings many significant benefits:

- **Subject Expertise:** Curriculum content is carefully sequenced and designed by subject specialists, ensuring depth, accuracy, and progression across year groups.
- **Reduced Teacher Workload:** Centralised planning saves teachers valuable time, enabling them to focus on refining delivery, differentiation, and pupil support.
- **Strengthened Subject Leadership:** Shared documentation and planning allow subject leaders to focus on impact, implementation, and professional dialogue rather than creation from scratch.
- **Collaborative Monitoring and Evaluation:** A common framework supports joined-up monitoring, peer review, moderation, and quality assurance across schools.
- **Leadership Development:** A consistent curriculum platform enables aspiring and existing leaders to develop confidence in leading improvement and curriculum design, supported by trust-wide CPD and networks.

While the benefits of our aligned curriculum are substantial, we also recognise that **no two schools are the same**. Contextual variation - such as differences in SEND profiles, EAL learners, pupil mobility, enrichment access, and musical opportunities (for example) - requires flexibility. To address this, we actively promote **careful adaptation, innovation and personalisation** of our aligned curriculum at academy level, ensuring it remains both **inclusive and ambitious**.

Personalising/Adapting a Trust-Wide Thematic Curriculum:

While an aligned curriculum provides a strong, coherent foundations, primary academies within Inspire must adapt aspects of delivery and pedagogy to meet the needs of their pupils and communities. We recognise that schools have individual contexts and needs, and as a result, there will need to be **adaptations and contextualisation** at school level. The table below shows the what, why and how of this (the how list is simply some examples rather than an exhaustive list). We will measure the impact of these as trust leaders walk alongside school leaders to understand the impact of the school's choices.

	Adaptations:	Contextualisation:
What?	Adaptations to the provision through LPA time. Done by teachers to ensure that the lessons are of the highest quality and meets the needs of all children.	Contextualisation at a whole school level. Curriculum leaders, senior leaders making deliberate choices about the delivery of their curriculum, they are the gate keepers of these choices to ensure the curriculum is broad and balanced.
Why?	Teachers know their children best. They need to use their knowledge of children's prior knowledge and existing needs to adapt the provision they provide to ensure all children master concepts within and across the curriculum.	Leaders know their schools best. They need to use their knowledge of their context to make additions and changes to their curriculum to make sure that all children see their place and belonging within the curriculum. These choices also ensure children master the curriculum offer.
How?	1. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) - Adapted resources and outcomes - Scaffolded tasks with additional support or adapted materials - Adjusted pace and use of technology or multi-sensory approaches 2. EAL (English as an Additional Language) - Language-rich environments with pre-teaching of key vocabulary - Visual aids, translated resources, and sentence stems to support academic language - Tailored reading comprehension and writing support 4. More Able Pupils (High Attainers) - Extension activities that promote deeper thinking and application - Independent projects, leadership roles, and wider reading opportunities - Tiered questioning and advanced reasoning tasks 5. Oracy (Speaking and Listening Skills) - Planned opportunities for discussion, debate, and structured talk across subjects - Explicit teaching of vocabulary, sentence structure, and speaking conventions - Use of dialogic teaching, talk partners, and drama-based activities	1. Understanding of cultural capital and start points - Adapted curriculum sequences of learning to spend more time on aspects of the curriculum which are an issue at school level - Added lessons to secure most important concepts due to lower start points - Additional units/ experiences to reflect the local community - Additional or supplementary texts to reflect the diverse make-up of the community 2. Transience (High Pupil Mobility) - Flexible unit design with clear entry points and modular structure - Diagnostic assessments to identify gaps and personalise catch-up - Strong induction processes to quickly integrate new pupils socially and academically - Slimming down of curriculum offer to focus on threshold concepts 3. Enrichment Opportunities - Local partnerships, themed days/weeks, and wider experiences linked to curriculum content - Equity-focused approaches to ensure all pupils access enrichment regardless of background - Outdoor learning, pupil-led projects, and community engagement 3. Pedagogical delivery - Unique curriculum pedagogical drivers embedded at a school level cue to context (e.g. Use of Oracy due to low starting points) - School identifying key pedagogical levers which are central to school level implementation (modelling techniques, explicit teaching strategies for vocabulary)

Thematic Curriculum

The Thematic Curriculum at Inspire Education Trust provides children with coherent and holistic contexts for learning interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. Contexts are motivating and engaging, with clear links to everyday life and the locality of our academies.

Themes begin with a 'Launch' event and include an 'Enrich' event at an appropriate point within the Theme journey to ensure children are getting exciting, relevant and above all memorable learning experiences within their Thematic Curriculum Learning

Launch

Enrich

Knowledge and skills taught in discrete Maths and English lessons are applied within each termly theme as and when appropriate.

The Inspire Thematic Curriculum has been organised through a 'theme based' approach which incorporates the knowledge and skills set out in the 2014 National Curriculum for History, Geography, Art and Design, Design and Technology and Music.

History

Geography

Art & Design

**Design &
Technology**

Music

History Curriculum Organisation within the Thematic Curriculum:



Aims of the History curriculum at Inspire Education Trust:

- To inspire children's curiosity about the past and its legacy
- To develop children's knowledge of local history, British history and world history
- To develop children's historical skills including understanding chronology, interpreting historical sources and making comparisons within and across historical periods
- To develop children's ability to reflect on the diversity of human societies over time and to consider the impact of the past on lives today.
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- To develop children's ability to reflect on the diversity of human societies over time and to consider the impact of the past on lives today.

In Early Years, the foundations of History are taught holistically, with knowledge and skills woven into engaging topics that have been developed systematically to ensure progression. Children develop knowledge about people and events in the past and learn to identify similarities and differences between the past and now. Children find out from the past from sources including books and photographs.

In Key Stage 1, History is taught through termly themes with a half-term's history focus. Children learn about the history of their school, the local area and seaside holidays in the past. Children's knowledge builds progressively to include significant events such as the Great Fire of London and the development of flight. They begin to use historical skills including understanding chronology, using historical sources and making comparisons across historical periods.

In Key Stage 2, History is taught through six in-depth themes, three in lower Key Stage 2 and three in upper Key Stage 2. Children learn about key aspects of British history including life in Roman, Tudor and 20th Century Britain. In addition, they learn about the legacy of the Ancient Greeks and early Islamic civilisation. Children develop their historical skills through using and interpreting historical sources, making comparisons within and across historical periods and explaining historical reasons, alongside building their understanding of chronology.

Knowledge Concepts (Substantive Knowledge)	Historical Skills (Disciplinary Knowledge)
• Chronological Knowledge • Society • Conflict and Power • Legacy • Significant Events • Significant People	• Understanding Chronology • Using and Interpreting Historical Sources • Explaining Historical Reasons • Making Comparisons within and across Historical Periods

Progression in skills is supported through a History Strand Tracker which identifies age-related expectations for key history skills:

- Understanding Chronology
- Using and Interpreting Historical Sources
- Explaining Historical Reasons
- Making Comparison within and across historical periods



Aims of the Geography curriculum:

- To inspire a curiosity about, and interest in, our world and its people
- To develop knowledge of geographically diverse places in the UK and around the world
- To identify key human and physical geographical features and processes of the world and explain how these relate to each other
- To develop geographical skills including using maps, carrying out field work and researching and presenting geographical information.

In Early Years, the foundations of Geography are taught holistically, with knowledge and skills woven into engaging topics that have been developed systematically to ensure progression. Children develop knowledge linked to themselves, their schools and the local area, as well as developing knowledge of places around the world. Children learn to describe their immediate environment using knowledge from first-hand experience and stories. Children learn to explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.

In Key Stage 1, Geography is taught through termly themes with a half-term's geography focus within each. Children learn about the geography of their school and the local area, including their village, town or city. Children's knowledge builds progressively to include London, the United Kingdom and the world, with a focus on India. They continue to use geographical skills including map work and field work, including field visits within the school grounds, the local area and a seaside location.

In Key Stage 2, Geography is taught through six in-depth themes, three in Lower Key Stage 2 and three in Upper Key Stage 2. Children learn about places beyond the local area, including Europe and South America, alongside developing knowledge of farming, rainforests, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes around the world and climate change. They learn the characteristics of both physical and human geography and develop their geographical skills further through map work and field work opportunities, including field visits to a local farm, a local river and a botanical garden.

Knowledge Concepts (Substantive Knowledge – <i>Knowing that...</i>)	Geographical Skills (Disciplinary Knowledge – <i>Knowing how...</i>)
• Place Knowledge – Local Area • Place Knowledge – UK • Place Knowledge – World • Physical Geography • Human Geography • Environment and Sustainability • Map Work & Field Work	• Reading Maps • Locating Places • Carrying Out Field Work • Researching & Presenting Geographical Information

Progression in skills is supported through a Geography Strand Tracker which identifies age-related expectations for key Geography skills:

- Reading Maps (maps and digital computer mapping)
- Locating Places
- Carrying out field work

- Researching and Presenting Geographical information

Art and Design Curriculum Organisation within the Thematic Curriculum:



Aims of the Art and Design curriculum:

- To inspire children's creativity when expressing what they observe, think and feel using different media
- To develop children's knowledge and appreciation of a diverse range of artists and their work
- To develop children's art, craft and design skills including drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, printing and digital art
- To build children's knowledge and use of the language of art, craft and design.

In Early Years, the foundations of Art and Design are taught holistically, with knowledge and skills woven into engaging topics that have been developed systematically to ensure progression. Children develop knowledge about colour, texture and form, and learn to draw, paint, print and collage in a variety of contexts including painting self-portraits, pattern printing and observational drawings.

In Key Stage 1, Art and Design is taught through termly art projects, each focused on one of the core disciplines of art and design – drawing, painting, sculpture, collage and printing. Children's knowledge of the differing disciplines is built through projects including painting a school playground scene, drawing a city scape from the local area and printing patterns inspired by Indian culture. They develop their skills across the disciplines, including colour mixing for painting, selecting colours for collage and designing an indented printing tile.

In Key Stage 2, Art and Design continues to be taught through termly art projects focused on the core disciplines of art and design – drawing, painting, sculpture, collage and printing. In addition, digital art is introduced in Upper Key Stage 2. Children further their knowledge of the differing disciplines through projects including landscape painting, drawing a still life and using recycled materials for a sculpture. Children continue to develop their skills across the disciplines, including considering proportion, creating mood and atmosphere and selecting from different shading techniques.

Across the key stages, art projects are taught using a bespoke teaching sequence:
Explore > Practise > Develop > Express.

In each art project, children explore the work of a significant classic or contemporary artist whose work is linked to the project outcome.

Knowledge Concepts (Substantive Knowledge)	Art & Design Skills (Disciplinary Knowledge)
• Drawing • Painting • Sculpture • Printing • Collage • Digital Art (UKS2) • Art Appreciation	• Drawing • Painting • Sculpture • Printing • Collage • Digital Art (UKS2) • Art Appreciation

Progression in skills is supported through an Art & Design Strand Tracker which identifies age-related expectations for key Art & Design skills:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Collage
- Printing
- Digital Art (UKS2)
- Art Appreciation

Our Inspire Artist Spine identifies British, European and World artists who have been chosen for focused study within Themes, allowing children to experience and appreciate the work of a diverse range of artists, from the past and the present. Selected artists include contemporary artists such as Banksy and Andy Goldsworthy as well as classic artists including Van Gogh and Henri Matisse

Design and Technology Curriculum Organisation with the Thematic Curriculum:

Aims of the Design and Technology curriculum at Inspire Education Trust:

- To inspire children's creativity and imagination when designing and making functional products
- To build children's technical knowledge through the disciplines of structures, mechanisms, textiles and electrical systems
- To develop children's design and technology skills, including researching, designing, making and evaluating
- To develop children's basic cooking techniques and application of healthy eating, promoting a love of cooking
- To build children's confidence and resilience when problem solving and taking risks.



In Early Years, the foundations of Design and Technology are taught holistically, with knowledge and skills woven into engaging topics that have been developed systematically to ensure progression. Children develop foundational knowledge of structures, textiles and cooking and nutrition, and learn to design and make in a variety of meaningful contexts, including making a house, cooking porridge and creating a ribbon stick.

In Key Stage 1, Design and Technology is taught through termly D&T projects, each focused on one of the core disciplines of D&T – structures, mechanisms, textiles and cooking & nutrition. Children's knowledge of the differing disciplines is built through projects including

a moving picture, a puppet and a fruit kebab. They develop their skills across the disciplines, including researching existing products, designing to match given design criteria and testing finished products.

In Key Stage 2, Design and Technology continues to be taught through termly D&T projects focused on the core disciplines of D&T – structures, mechanisms, textiles and cooking & nutrition. In addition, electrical systems are introduced in Upper Key Stage 2. Children further their knowledge of the differing disciplines through projects including a bridge, a moving figure and a Caribbean-inspired dish. Children continue to develop their skills across the disciplines, including generating design criteria, evaluating finished products and using computer-aided design.

Across the key stages, D&T projects are taught using a bespoke teaching sequence: Research > Design > Make > Evaluate

Knowledge Concepts (Substantive Knowledge)	Design & Technology Skills (Disciplinary Knowledge)
• Cooking & Nutrition • Structures • Textiles • Mechanisms • Electrical Systems (UKS2)	• Researching • Designing • Making • Evaluating • Cooking & Nutrition • Structures • Textiles • Mechanisms • Electrical Systems (UKS2)

Progression in skills is supported through a Design & Technology Strand Tracker which identifies age-related expectations for key Design & Technology Skills:

- Research
- Design
- Make Technical Knowledge and Skills
- Evaluate

Music Curriculum Organisation with the Thematic Curriculum:



Aims of the Music curriculum at Inspire Education Trust:

- To inspire in children a love of music and develop their interests and talents as musicians
- To develop children's knowledge and appreciation of a diverse range of genres, traditions, musicians and composers
- To develop children's skills in singing, improvising and composing, playing, performing and appreciating
- To build children's knowledge and use of the language of music, including the interrelated dimensions of music.

In Early Years, the foundations of Music are taught holistically, with knowledge and skills woven into engaging topics that have been developed systematically to

ensure progression. Children develop knowledge of different styles of music and learn to sing, play instruments and perform in a variety of contexts, including singing nursery rhymes and songs, playing percussion instruments and singing, playing and performing in a Christmas performance.

In Key Stage 1, Music is taught through termly music projects as part of the Thematic Curriculum, each focused on differing core disciplines of music. Children's knowledge of the differing disciplines is built through projects including singing sea shanties and songs from musicals, and composing a local area soundscape and bhangra-style rhythms. Children develop their skills across the disciplines, including singing in unison, exploring rhythms on untuned instruments and expressing opinions.

In Key Stage 2, Music continues to be taught through termly music projects focused on the core disciplines of music. Children further their knowledge of the different disciplines through projects including appraising music from Brazil, composing digitally and singing songs from around the world. Children continue to develop their skills across the disciplines, including singing with clear diction, composing with layers of sound and explaining emotion and mood within music.

Knowledge Concepts (Substantive Knowledge)	Music Skills (Disciplinary Knowledge)
• Musical genres and traditions • Musicians & composers • Interrelated dimensions of music ◦ Pitch ◦ Rhythm ◦ Duration ◦ Dynamics ◦ Tempo ◦ Timbre ◦ Texture ◦ Structure ◦ Notation	• Listening & Appreciating • Singing • Playing • Improvising & Composing

Progression in skills is supported through a Music Strand Tracker which identifies age-related expectations for key Music Skills:

- Musical Genres and Traditions
- Musicians & Composers
- Interrelated Dimensions of Music
- Singing
- Improving and Composing
- Playing

Additional learning experiences are provided beyond the Thematic Curriculum where children can further develop their knowledge and skills in Music. These include a regular singing assembly, instrument lessons and clubs such as choir and recorders. Children have opportunities to take part in local cross-school events including *Morning of Music*, as well as larger-scale events such as *Young Voices* too.

Enrichment Experiences / Links with Parents and the Community

Teaching staff are encouraged to broaden the experiences for the children within themes through **educational visits, visitors into school** and **shared experiences of the wider school community**, for example, involvement with parents and cross-school links etc. Visits make good use of local places of interest, and include places such as Coventry Transport Museum, the Lunt Roman Fort and Coventry Air Museum and Coventry Cathedral.

Children's achievements are celebrated regularly through school newsletters, displays and in assemblies where children are encouraged to share their knowledge and skills with the rest of the school.

In addition to this, we involve parents and the wider community in the following ways:

- Curriculum letters to parents are sent at the start of each term, outlining key information about the theme.
- Children and families are invited to take part in the Inspire Awards Scheme, where, through sets of challenges, children learn about and enjoy the world around them outside school, whilst making lasting memories.
- Themes are tailored to national, local and school events and people e.g. Sir Frank Whittle, the Coventry Transport industry, the Coventry Blitz.
- Members of the community/parents are invited to share experiences related to our themes:

Thematic Curriculum Planning

Long Term Plans: These take the form of a Curriculum Overview which gives the overview of what themes will be taught and when across year.

Thematic Curriculum Long-Term Plan 2025-2026

	Autumn			Spring			Summer		
	School Days			Where We Live			Seaside Explorers		
Year 1	School & Its Surrounds	History of the School	Local Area	History in the Local Area	Seaside Location Study	Seaside Holidays in the Past	Seaside Location Study	Seaside Holidays in the Past	Seaside Location Study
	Painting: Progression Scheme	Cooking & Nutrition: Healthy Lunchbox	Singing: Autumn Songs	Drawing: City Scenes	Structures: Picture Frames	Improving / Comparing: Local Area	Seashore: Natural materials artwork	Textiles: Puppet	Singing: Sea Shanties
Year 2	The Big Smoke	The Great Fire of London	Continents & Oceans	Up, Up and Away!	History of Flight	Contrasting Locality: Mumbai	Aspects of India's History	Aspects of India's History	Aspects of India's History
	The UK & London	Collage: Land Use	Seashore: City Building	Singing: Songs from Mumbai	Painting: Aircraft: Light Images	Mechanisms: Moving Pictures	Singing: Songs from Mumbai	Drawing & Painting: Pattern Making	Cooking & Nutrition: Cook: Kebab
Year 3	Above Sea Level	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule	Roman Rule
	Painting: Landscape	Seashore: Shells	Listening & Appreciating: Celtic Folk	Painting: Architecture: Modern and	Textiles: Dressmaking: Bag	Improving / Comparing: Model for a Bridge	Drawing: Old Life	Cooking & Nutrition: Food: Curry	Singing: Songs from: About Nations

Medium Term Plans: These take the form of Curriculum Planners. These provide information about:

- National Curriculum coverage for History, Geography, Art & Design, Design & Technology and Music
- Suggestions for Launch and Enrich Events
- Memorable experiences, Core knowledge and Core skills within the theme

- The learning focuses within the theme.

Learning focuses are based around enquiry questions. Curriculum planners detail core knowledge covered in each learning focus along with skills-based learning objectives.

Personalisation of curriculum planners takes place as appropriate at individual academy level, in order to maximise local links and current school development focuses.

Short Term Plans – These take the form of individual PowerPoints. These support the learning journey through each learning focus, with enquiry questions and learning objectives included to support the development of both knowledge and skills.

When planning our theme lessons, we consider:

- How the theme will be launched (a 'wow' factor, that could be a visit, visitor or a trip);
- Opportunities for trips and visits from external agencies;
- What the learning outcomes will be
- Key Assessment Opportunities linked to memorable experiences, core knowledge and core skills

As with curriculum planners, personalisation of flipchart planning takes place as appropriate at individual academy level, in order to best match the learning needs of individual cohorts of children.

Adaptations:

Class teachers base their adaptive teaching strategies on their knowledge of the children within their classes, and those children's needs. A range of strategies are used when fit-for-purpose to support children's access to learning and provide additional challenge, including task, grouping and use of resources. The progression Strand Trackers are used by teachers and leaders to ensure appropriate adaptation of the core skills focus within Theme learning focuses. Teachers are able to track back to lower year groups to support children who are not yet working at age-related expectations, as well as to track forwards to challenge more able learners in a particular skill.

Within all Theme lessons, teachers plan for appropriate access to wider curriculum areas for children identified as SEND, ensuring children benefit from the broad and balanced curriculum at a suitable challenge level for all.

Assessment in the Thematic Curriculum

Knowledge and skills in all subjects are assessed throughout the Theme using a range of formative and assessment strategies:

- On-going assessment for learning is used throughout the Theme to provide regular assessment of children's knowledge and skills.
- Retrieval practice is used at the beginning of each Learning Focus to support the retention of knowledge in children's long-term memories.
- An assessment quiz is completed by children at an appropriate point within the Theme to assess children's learning of core knowledge for all subjects within the Theme.
- Knowledge and Skills Strand Trackers are used by teachers to identify children who are working at, above and below age-related expectations for each of the subjects. These are used to inform planning and teaching within subsequent Themes.
- Additional ongoing assessment includes:
 - Theme books – including children's reflections and comments.
 - Questioning and discussion.
 - Children's work – exercise books, paper, posters, oral presentations, performances, photographs, videos etc.
 - Peer- and Self-assessment.

Theme Picture Building:

Planning: Long- and medium-term planning is provided for staff by the Trust Curriculum Team. Short-term planning, in particular adaptation and academy-based personalisation, is monitored on an on-going cycle throughout the year Senior Leadership Teams, alongside the Trust Curriculum team as appropriate.

Theme Books: These are monitored on a regular basis by members of the Academy Leadership Teams, working alongside the Trust Curriculum Team as appropriate. Expectations for Standards in theme books are outlined to staff. Theme Books are also be monitored by individual subject leaders, again alongside the Trust Curriculum Team where necessary.

Pupil Voice: As part of regular pupil voice activities, children are invited to share their work and their views on the curriculum with the Head Teacher or members of the School Leadership team.

Learning Walks and Lesson Observations: These take place as part of the cycle of school self-evaluation and monitoring.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to give all children, irrespective of age, gender or ethnic origin equal opportunity to make maximum progress. It is expected that all children will be given the opportunity to learn the Thematic Curriculum in a creative and encouraging learning environment which encompasses a range of learning and teaching styles. All lessons are catered appropriately to meet the needs of all learners. It is hoped that this approach will motivate and support children's learning at all levels including the Able and Talented, EAL and children identified with a Special Educational Need (SEND).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of School Improvement (Primary), the Executive Headteachers (Primary), all Senior Primary Leads, Local Governing Body have overall responsibility for the Thematic Curriculum. They are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Thematic Curriculum and are supported by members of each academy's Senior Leadership Team through:

- Regular formal and informal discussions with staff;
- Monitoring planning to ensure curriculum coverage and accurate pitch;
- Carrying out picture building activities alongside planning;
- Observing learning and teaching to ensure quality teaching of knowledge and skills;
- Regular reviews of the curriculum through staff and pupil questionnaires and open dialogue;
- Making changes where necessary;
- Speaking with the children about their learning.

All teaching staff are responsible for the personalising of planning and delivery of the Thematic curriculum on a weekly basis and for making cross-curricular links where appropriate. Staff make amendments to planning to optimise learning opportunities when they arise for their children contextually within their locality.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the Trust Improvement Plan- at the end of the first year of implementation (July 26).

Responsibility

The Inspire Education Trust Board of Directors have a responsibility for the oversight of this and all policies within the Trust's academies and may delegate the implementation and review of this policy in accordance with our Scheme of Delegation.

Written By:	Mathew Thomas	July 2025
Reviewed By:		
Senior Lead Review:	Rob Darling	August 2025
Next Review Date:		September 2026
Approved by Directors:		6 October 2025

Signed:



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Nicky Aston
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