

# Inspection of Bright Sparks Playgroup at Empingham

Empingham C of E Primary School, School Lane, Empingham, Oakham, Rutland  
LE15 8PQ

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Inspection date:

25 May 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is inadequate

Staff do not have good enough knowledge and understanding of how to monitor children's safety during routine activities. Children are not adequately checked while sleeping. Younger children are not strapped into highchairs and are not supervised effectively while eating. This means that staff may not be alerted quickly enough to any incidents of choking. The manager does not have a robust procedure to ensure that staff are suitable when recruiting, and risk assessments are not always carried out effectively to highlight potential risks to children's safety.

Children are warmly greeted when they enter the setting. Children do not have an identified key person, which means their individual needs are not always met. Despite this, children enjoy being around staff members and have strong bonds. Staff know the children well and plan activities based on children's interests. However, the curriculum is not adapted well enough to be inclusive for all children, especially toddlers. Often, these children wander around without being engaged in meaningful learning. Children whose development is not yet mature enough to engage independently with activities receive fewer interactions from staff.

Older children show high levels of concentration and focus. They enjoy going on a hunt in the garden to find natural items. They talk about what they have found. Staff point out a spider's web blowing in the wind, and the children watch in awe. Children build confidence as they are constantly praised by staff for their achievements. Children behave well and get along with each other. They enjoy helping to tidy up after they have been outside.

### What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager and staff are not aware of the importance of adequate supervision of children. During snack time, for example, staff do not notice when children fall asleep with food in their mouths. Children who are asleep are not regularly and sufficiently checked. This could result in staff not being alerted to any incidents where children may require emergency first-aid treatment, such as for choking.
- The manager does not complete effective risk assessments of the environment. Potential hazards, such as hanging cables and dangers in the outdoor area, have not been highlighted or addressed. The manager does not gain written parental consent before administering medication to children. Medication forms are not sufficiently filled out by staff, and some have information missing.
- The manager has ensured that all staff working directly with children have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks in place. However, there is a lack of evidence to demonstrate that safe recruitment practices have been followed. The manager has no documents relating to interviews, references or

identity records.

- The manager has not implemented an effective key-person system. Parents comment that they are not sure who their child's key person is. Staff are unclear of their role and what is expected of them. As a result, children's individual needs are not consistently being met during everyday routines and activities.
- Staff lack sufficient knowledge and skills to effectively develop children's communication and language. Children enjoy the sensitive interactions they have from staff. However, often, these interactions do not develop into a flow of conversation. Staff ask a lot of questions of children and do not give them sufficient time to respond. Staff do not attempt to adapt their interactions for younger children. They do not simplify language or name objects to support emerging speech.
- Children do not learn how to make good choices in relation to healthy lifestyles. Staff make attempts to discuss healthy eating at mealtimes. They label some food as healthy, however, they do not elaborate or explain this further to children. The manager does not work together with parents to support healthy eating. Children do not have access to fresh drinking water and, instead, they are given juice in bottles throughout the day. As a result, children's oral health is compromised.
- Staff do not receive supervisions or appraisals from the manager. This means that weaknesses in the quality of teaching are not identified and addressed. As a result, staff are not getting enough support to help them improve their practice and highlight training needs.
- The manager uses funding appropriately to make positive changes for children. She has identified gaps in children's learning with regards to role playing and has made improvements to the outdoor space. Children enjoy the new equipment and pretend to make drinks for the dolls. The manager comments on the positive impact this has had on children.
- Staff promote the use of mathematical concepts throughout the day. They encourage children to count chairs at snack time and talk about different sizes in play. Children problem-solve with shape sorters, turning the shapes around in order to fit them in the holes. They are sensitively encouraged by staff to keep going when they run into challenges.
- Parents are happy with the care their children receive. They comment that the small setting is like a 'home-from-home' environment. They have access to an online learning journal that they use to see what their child has been doing in the setting. Staff regularly share information with parents through messages and daily conversations.
- Staff encourage children to develop their physical skills. They are aware of the positive effect that being outside has on children's mental health. Children spend time in the fresh air, running around the field. They skilfully climb to the top of wooden pyramids. Children use their fine motor skills to make marks with chalk and manipulate play dough.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Children may be at risk of harm during sleep and mealtimes due to the lack of robust safety procedures and staff supervision. Some areas of the setting have not been risk assessed effectively to highlight potential hazards, for example, wires are left where children can reach them. The manager does not make sure she has written consent from parents before administering medications. Overall, staff have a good knowledge and understanding of identifying the signs that may indicate a child is at risk of abuse. They are clear on the procedure of how to report any concerns, including those about a staff member.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

**To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage and Childcare Register the provider must:**

	Due date
ensure all children are supervised well at mealtimes to make sure staff can attend to any incidents of choking that may arise	08/06/2023
ensure procedures are put in place and followed by all staff members to regularly check sleeping children to promote their well-being and keep them safe	08/06/2023
implement effective risk assessments of the environment to identify and reduce any potential hazards to children	08/06/2023
implement robust recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff	29/06/2023
implement an effective key-person system and ensure staff have a thorough understanding of their role in it to support children's individual needs during everyday routines and activities	29/06/2023
improve the curriculum to ensure it meets the learning and development needs of all children, particularly with regard to communication and language	25/07/2023

ensure the importance of healthy eating and oral hygiene are promoted to children and parents	25/10/2023
implement effective supervisions to mentor and coach staff and highlight training needs to raise the quality of teaching	25/10/2023
ensure written parental consent is gained before medication is given to children.	08/06/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	254363
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10264676
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	1 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	21
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	18
<b>Name of registered person</b>	Healey, Gail
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP908500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572 812124
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 June 2017

## Information about this early years setting

Bright Sparks Playgroup registered in 1992 and is located in Empingham in Rutland. The playgroup employs three members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and one at level 2. The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.15pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Leonie Miller

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the playgroup.
- The manager took the inspector on a learning walk, where they discussed the curriculum.
- The inspector sought the views of parents.
- The inspector observed interactions between staff and children.
- A sample of documentation was viewed by the inspector.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of practice with the manager.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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