

# 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:

1 November 2023

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## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Inadequate

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

### The provision is inadequate

The provider, who is also the manager, has not made sure there is a member of staff suitably qualified to administer first aid. Therefore, staff are not adequately trained to respond to medical emergencies involving children. Children receive a poor quality of education as staff lack the knowledge and skills to create and implement an effective curriculum. Staff do not use activities and experiences to build on what children already know and can do because they focus on the end-product of an activity. Some children listen to staff's instructions on how to use coloured sand and glue to decorate a printed picture of shapes and are able to repeat the names of different colours. However, they quickly become uninterested as this activity is not appropriately designed for children to develop their skills and knowledge further. As staff's knowledge of different cultures, such as Hinduism, is weak, they teach children incorrect and confusing information, notably that Diwali is the same as Christmas. Children do not have opportunities to develop perseverance because staff take over when children need opportunities to practise and learn new skills, one example of this is when staff peel their fruit at snack time.

Despite this, children have close bonds with all staff and receive the compassion and nurturing they need to settle in their care. They receive praise from staff for being kind and respectful to their friends. Children behave well and learn some routines, such as tidying resources away when they have finished playing. Children willingly join other's play and enjoy each other's company, despite the lack of high-quality staff interactions.

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

- Staff do not consistently focus on closing gaps in children's learning. Although they can identify what children already know and can do, and what some children need to learn next, they do not effectively use this information. Staff plan what they want the children, as a group, to focus on, which is not appropriate for some children's differing age and ability.
- Staff do not make sure they understand the topics they use to plan activities, such as autumn and Diwali. They do not ensure the information and knowledge they share with children is accurate, clear and appropriate for their stage of learning. As a result, children are not learning why people from other cultures have different celebrations to their own. Furthermore, staff ask children too many questions and do not give them time to think and respond. This means that children are not supported well enough to develop their vocabulary.
- The manager does not ensure that activities meet children's individual learning needs. Much of the learning that takes place is incidental and children do not make the progress they are capable of. For example, when staff encourage

children to play with pretend food, they narrow children's learning by only focusing on their ability to count the objects and use numbers. Staff give little thought to using imaginative activities to support children to develop their social and communication skills.

- Occasionally, staff's expectations prevent children from being able to make the most of their chosen play. For example, as children explore sand in a small tray, staff are preoccupied with the children keeping the sand in the tray, and do not engage with children in purposeful play.
- Since the last inspection, the manager has taken some steps to improve the arrangements for when children are sleeping and when supervising children when they play. However, while children's safety has improved, not enough has been done to raise the quality of teaching and learning provided.
- The manager does not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage requirements (EYFS). As a result, she does not have the oversight needed to identify potential issues and weaknesses, for example, in staff practice. Therefore, the manager is unable to take the appropriate action needed in a timely manner.
- Staff are caring and nurturing towards children. They hold pleasant conversations with them about their home life and their interests. Staff help children complete some daily routines, such as helping them wipe the table and sweep the floor. They remind them to use the words please and thank you when responding to others and encourage good table manners. Staff praise children for being kind and helpful. As a result, children gain independence skills and generally behave well.
- Parents and carers speak positively about the relationships children have with all the staff. They explain staff care deeply about the children. Parents are happy with the communication they receive from staff and feel comfortable to ask for support or guidance when needed.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The manager does not ensure there is a suitably qualified paediatric first-aider on site. Therefore, there is no member of staff effectively trained to support children in the event of a medical emergency. However, staff understand the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. They understand how to record and report anything that gives them cause for concern. Staff monitor the setting for risks and hazards and take action to minimise or remove these risks. There are recruitment systems in place to ensure all staff working with children are safe and suitable.

## 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 there is at least one person who has a full and relevant current paediatric first-aid qualification on the premises and available at all times	01/12/2023
ensure staff implement a curriculum that meets the learning and development needs of all children, particularly with regard to communication and language and understanding the world around them	01/12/2023
improve the manager's knowledge and understanding of their role and responsibility to meet the requirements of the EYFS.	01/12/2023

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	254363
<b>Local authority</b>	Rutland Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10299854
<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>	25 May 2023

## Information about this early years setting

Bright Sparks Playgroup at Empingham 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 Thursday, 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**  
Lora Teague

## Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector conducted a learning walk together, discussing the learning intention for children and how the environment is arranged.
- The manager and inspector observed and evaluated an activity.
- The inspector observed children of all ages through the setting.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager regularly during the inspection.
- Parents' and carers' views were taken into consideration.
- A sample of documents were reviewed, including paediatric first-aid certificates, suitability checks, and safeguarding policies and procedures.

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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