

Annual Inspection of play space and apparatus
Adderbury Parish Council
Oxfordshire

Date Thursday June 6th 2019

Procedures

The inspections were carried out by John Hicks. M.A. (Oxon) RPII

RPII Annual inspector – Registration number 1016A

John Hicks' Enhanced Criminal Disclosure Certificate number

001649332456

Renewed date of issue 28th February 2019

Standard risk assessment procedures have been adopted here as well as, where relevant, British standard BSEN 1176 2008

Explanatory notes

1. This inspections were carried through within the requirements and advice of British Standard (BS) EN1176 2017 as well as in the case of the older units EN 1176 2008 Parts 1-7 inclusive as well as BS EN 1177 and where relevant BS 5696. Procedures adopted are those incorporated in *The Playground Inspection and Maintenance Manual* – John Hicks 2nd edition 2005. See the attached note on the new British standard.
2. Inspections employ entirely non-dismantling procedures.
3. While the suppliers might prescribe advised ages for use, it has been assumed that the equipment on site is available to all and access for all ages is limited only by teacher's or other carers' discretion, child size, boldness and abilities.
4. The standard protocols for equipment accessible to children aged 0-14 were applied in all cases.
5. The equipment inspected partially meets current requirements relating to the marking of equipment, and so in this respect meets the relevant standard
6. Where concerns relating to safety arise they are highlighted in **bold print**. In these cases advice or recommendations are offered to reduce identified risk or other problems.
7. A basic risk assessment has been made. Where indications of risk are evident they are based upon the information and advice incorporated in

Assessing Risk on Children's Playgrounds - Bob Cook & Peter Heseltine
3rd edition - RoSPA 2002.

8. Opinions offered in relation to access issues are based upon Accessible and Inclusive Playspace – 2nd edition 2005 – John Hicks.
 9. The layout incorporates numbers of accessible play items for children of all abilities but while no full and formal 'Access Audits' has been carried out, the inspector considers that as found the location largely meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) as fully implemented on October 1st 2004 and substantially extended by the Act of 2005, the Equality Act 2010 and the consequent Public Sector Equality Duty
 10. There is at present a national debate taking place in relation to the toleration of risk in play and the judgement of the Appeal Court – Regina v Porter 2008 – which dismisses some risks as being 'fanciful' or 'hypothetical' is noted and these degrees of risk as well as 'the trivial risks of everyday life' are subsumed within the term 'low risk', which requires no action to be taken. See the attached advisory note.
- The fact that an item fails to fully meet the current standard (BSEN 1176) does not mean that it is unsafe.
 - Where concerns relating to safety arise they are highlighted in bold print. In these cases advice or recommendations are offered to reduce identified risk or other problems.

Introductory comments.

As has become customary an advisory note is attached – An new list of technical terms and useful notes

Executive summary

All of the equipment is in sound order as found and much as previously reported on but there is a new problem here.

It would appear that tamper proof fasteners have been accessed, see The Rise report. It is possible that a malicious individual seeks to compromise safety here and a regular check on all fastener points is advised. The safety chains on the pod swing unit remain detached . Medium risk

Adderbury West Site – Lucy Plackett – off Round Close Road

Introductory comments

The inspection was unaccompanied

The content of reports tends to remain the same from year to year and so once again comments that have been made several times are omitted and replaced by advisory notes where necessary

References to cracks and shakes in timber over recent times are now covered in the earlier advisory note

The council provides for the needs of children aged 4-12 and, if accompanied, some younger children.

New equipment has been installed which is fully described within the 2018 Post Installation Inspection (PII) report which takes precedence over annual reports by reason of their greater rigour and scrutiny

Access

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Largely as in former times but this time just days before the annual fair and so fewer problems

Signs

Consistently improved over recent years

Seats

The surfaces would benefit from being sanded and varnished to remove and prevent surface growths.

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Litter bins

One which at the time of the visit was empty

Cleanliness

Satisfactory overall.

The equipment

1. Adventure trail 13 elements– Playdale

There remains evident cracking and splits in timber sections which should be monitored as should the rot in some sections, see in particular the strimmer damage. But see the earlier notes on this topic

Chains slack but while limiting active play this is merely a trip hazard of low risk.

Surfacing

Grass which is an excellent and self renewing safety surface for all fall heights up to one metre

2. Three cradle seat swings

In sound order as found

Three swings in one bay is not generally approved of since there is a risk of impact injury arising from this.

Some chain wear which should be monitored

Advise removal of the centre seat and chains. Low/medium risk

Surfacing

Wet pour- edges create trip points Low/medium risk There is evident moss and weed colonisation here.

3. Three junior swings

In sound order as found apart from slightly 'pulled' joints and a degree of chain wear which should be monitored Low risk .

Three swings in one bay is not generally approved of since there is a risk of impact injury arising from this.

Monitor minor splits in seat soft surfaces. Low risk.

Surfacing

Holed and with trip points at the edges .Low risk

4. Multi play unit – Playdale

Rot is developing in the platform – monitor and in due time replace. Low risk

There are unexpected obstacles at the foot of the net climber Low risk.

Seats under make this a user friendly item with low level play opportunities

There is significant laminate wear especially on platform edges and the ramp - replacement of the surfacing should be considered. Low risk for now

Surfacing

Wet pour

5. Spring see saw

Noisy in use, slight damage and with an increasingly eccentric lateral swinging action . Advise monitoring pending renewal. This is also a user friendly item. Low risk.

Surfacing

Wet pour. Sinking - Low risk.

6. Small multi play unit – Gametime

The forest of small trees and scrub was cleared last year and so the previously reported problems have gone too.

Sound and secure as found and on a grassmat surface
There is surface damage here but low risk

Surfacing

Wet pour. Advise a regular clean off programme. Low risk.

Recent acquisitions

Three items noted in the fenced play area

1. An 'A' framed climber unit.

Sound and secure as found and on a grassmat surface

2. Rope/nets/ posts climber made up of seven (7) discrete elements forming a challenging adventure play experience. This item fails BS grip/grasp requirements, see technical note 3 attached. This is a common failing in timber framed apparatus but is generally rated Low risk

Sound and secure as found and on a grassmat surface

3. Proludic climber unit with arch, net and 'big boy toy slide bars'

Sound and secure as found and on a grassmat surface

MUGA

Installed some years ago and it remains in sound order generally Low risk

Two seats and a baffle strategically located here.

Four items were installed here last year

1. A Pod, bird's nest or basket swing has been installed on a grass mat surface
Sound and secure as found and rated as one of the better types of innovation in play in recent year

There remains a problem here since the attached safety chains are hanging free and not connected as required. Early action is advised here to address what should have been a simple snagging problem post PII report

2. A Rodeo rider board mounted on a grass mat surface which appears to be ill laid or it is simply sinking.

A fun item for the older child

3. A Proludic cableway commonly called a ZIP wire rider with a step platform start point . The new standard has been published on this range of apparatus but it might have been supplied under the older version – see the earlier brief note

The rider appears to sit low and so perhaps tensioning is required – the suppliers will have made available all necessary information and advice on this issue

The suspension element incorporates a rubber composition cover which as previously reported is split .

The grassmat surface is a wear pad and not a safety surface – see technical note 6

4. Proludic Altima Post. This is at its best the ultimate big boy toy requiring significant upper body and arm strength as well as some nerve in racing up to the flag but it certainly does not fall for consideration under current British standards

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Introductory comments.

Twyford – The Rise

Introductory comments

There is again evidence of on-going repair and maintenance work here especially in relation to the fence and gates

The play area serves the needs of children aged 5-14 and, if accompanied, some younger children.

Access

Over grass and through one of two gates which is best practice

Signs

Limited

Litter bins

One

Cleanliness

Satisfactory overall.

One bench

NEW

Two recently installed play units

This equipment was fully described in the required Post Installation Inspection (PII) report which takes precedence over annual reports by reason of its greater rigour and scrutiny

1.Spring see saw. Soundly and securely installed on a wet pour surface of adequate dimensions which, subject to certification, will meet all necessary standards requirements.

2. An adventure trail secured on a new wet pour surface and made up of six (6) main elements. A bar, rope, wall with stones, net, bar and balance beam

There is a tamper proof fastener here which is not fully home indicating an attempt to remove it – advise regular monitoring of all fastening points

The equipment

1. Two flat + two cradle seat swings

There is some damage to soft seat edges..

Some rusting – slight chain wear evident Low risk.

Surfacing

Wet pour

2. Stilt slide

There is a potential clothing, toggle, entrapment on the chute. Low risk.
Some surface rusting evident here.

Surfacing

Surfacing remains in sound condition but there is some evidence of sinkage

3. Multiplay unit SMP

In sound order with only superficial surface damage evident.

Monitor splits on the bridge sections. Low risk

Surfacing

Wet pour. of adequate dimensions and properly installed

4. Spring toy - Cat

Remains noisy and eccentric in action. Low risk.

Surfacing

Wet pour. of adequate dimensions but some damage evident – hole at the edge creating a trip point. Low risk

Area 2 – grass

5. Multigame and seating area - Sutcliffe

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The top bar surface is worn indicating use as an exercise or 'perching' bar

The basket ball and goal area configuration might present as a minor impact injury hazard to people sitting here. Low risk

Surfacing

Worn earth, grass and paving slabs. Evidently well used for social contact and picnics – fast food wrappers.

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Tax point 10th June 2019

Invoice

To undertaking the inspection of play equipment and safety surfaces, a zip wire, and further new equipment on two locations and providing a report £57 + £57 + £57 = £171 – 10% = £153.9 + VAT @ 20% £30.78

Total = £184.68

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Technical and other terms in general use and a note on standards

When inspection reports are received clients commonly express concern at the fact that they don't understand what specific terms and advice mean. To rectify this situation there follows a compendium of frequently used technical terms.

1. Bar over chute not in place or not in standard form. Attached (but not stilt or other free standing) slides require a rail or bar across the access opening which should be at a height between 600mm and 900mm and the sides of the starting section should be at least 500mm high. Grip/grasp requirements apply in this case and in every related case unless specifically excluded.
2. Finger trap if an 8mm rod can readily enter an accessible space in a raised section of play equipment then a 25mm rod. must freely enter too
3. Grip/grasp fail is a reference to the diameter of ladder rungs stiles and related parts that are used for support or balance. Rungs must not exceed 60 mm in diameter (this is the 'grasp' requirement); alternatively, the ladder must have handrails between 16 and 45 mm in diameter (the 'grip' requirement). 'Grip' is related to a child's need to support weight, while 'grasp' is a necessary aid to balance and stability
4. Head traps occur at heights in excess of 600mm from the ground and in association with completely bound openings such as ladder rungs where probe C fully enters the space but probe D does not There is a theoretical justification for this possibly not being a BS breach if it can be guaranteed that children are all aged over 36months otherwise it can be disregarded.
5. HIC - Head Injury Criterion is a measure of the severity of the potential head injury arising from a series of contrived and recorded impacts from a variety of heights onto impact absorbing materials. BSEN 1177, on the basis of statistical analysis and findings, and in recognition of the severity of head injuries, sets a Head Injury Criterion (HIC) at a tolerance level of 1,000. Additionally, the standard provides a test method for testing any and all surfacing materials approved for use in the impact area of any playground Test methods appropriate to laboratory or 'on site' conditions have been agreed but since the use of the required triaxial and uniaxial accelerometers, test rigs and guidance systems are limited in relation both to availability, reliability and cost such procedures are permitted but are generally judged inappropriate for use in the routine cycle of inspections and are seldom justified or wholly persuasive on other occasions. When questions are raised in relation to the effectiveness of safety surfacing reference should be made to the certification and guarantees provided by the suppliers of the material as per the original specification and contract.
6. Insufficient safety surfacing For fall heights between 1 metre and 1.5 metres, install surfacing for 1.5 metres all round and for heights between 1.5 and 2.5 metres extend the area to 2.5 metres (but see the note on

grass as a safety surface). Roundabouts require safe surfacing to a minimum of 2 metres all round. Cable runways must have 2 metres of surfacing to each side of the runway path. Alternatively loose fill material (LIAS) is scattered or troughed and so of inadequate depth. LIAS requires regular management since a minimum depth must be maintained at 300mm

7. LIAS Loose impact attenuating surface such as sand, pea gravel, bark and wood chip.
8. Low, medium or high risk, Expressions of opinion translating as 'note but no action needed', 'remedy where possible' and 'take action to bar use pending a remedy'. Wheeled sports always incorporate high risk which is mitigated by appropriate location, management, training, and required protective clothing
9. Orientation British Standards require *inter alia that suppliers of equipment should provide advice relating to orientation as necessary in relation to sun and wind*. Essentially this is a version of the earlier BS 5696 requirement to avoid solar gain on slide chutes which might point north, east or west but never south.
10. Potential crush injury is evident on bridges, or in other positions where e.g. gap dimensions change during use, when the minimum dimension in any position is less than 12mm. See saws and rockers can also cause crush injury.
11. Safety surface needed In relation to fall heights up to 60 cm grass and loose topsoil are acceptable as a surface, and under favourable conditions such surfaces are safe for falls up to one metre (but see the note specifically extending this in some circumstances). Beyond this point an installed surface is required even within enclosed spaces such as playhouses.
12. Slide chute is not full width Sliding section of slide chutes should be the full width of the starting section i.e. no gaps to the sides creating 'toggle' or potential clothing entrapment. See also the note on finger traps.
13. Swing seats set low the minimum ground clearance recommended by BS is 350mm – there is no maximum.
14. Unexpected obstacles Objects or parts that intrude into circulation areas and so can trip or cause collision injury.
15. Wet pour Cast polymeric bound rubber crumb used as a safety surface and usually contained within edge pavers is generally described as 'wetpour'
16. Rot and decay - When wooden sections are replaced it is recommended that timber conforming to BS EN 335:2013 Use Class 4 be specified since this is specifically treated for situations within which wood is in direct contact with ground and/or fresh water
17. More generally timber should be treated in accordance with EN 351-1-2007 Plywood shall be in accordance with EN 636 and shall be weatherproofed
18. Varieties of Impact attenuating materials, grain sizes in mm, minimum depth required, in mm an additional 100mm depth is required for drifting and kick out

Bark 20 to 80mm at 200mm

Woodchip 5 to 30 mm at 200mm

Sand 0.2 to 2mm at 200mm

Gravel 2 to 8mm at 200mm

19. Mulch A bonded rubber surface made up of recycled (old tyres usually) rubber combined with a binder on site. This material is useful as an all weather pathway as well as an impact attenuating surface – see note 6 above – As a comparatively recently introduced surface material clients are reminded that the depth of the materials should be not less than the thickness of the product tested as defined in the test certificate supplied by the installer/supplier, when fully tested in accordance with BS EN 1177(2008)

Appendix New standards

As a part of its customary five year review BSI introduced on 30th September of 2017 BS EN 1176:2017 replacing the current standard which was withdrawn on the 31st October 2018 after a period of grace allowed to the industry to amend products.

In what might be considered a late response to evident need The EC Technical Committee CEN/TC136/SCI 'Children's Playground Equipment' has prepared a document on the issues raised and in its role as Secretariat to the committee the British Standards Institute (BSI) has prepared a working document TC 136 W1 : 2013 (E) which is summarised and discussed below.

In reviewing EN 1176 the committee revisits those parts of the standard which express both the purposes of play and the need to manage it appropriately and specifically draw attention to :

'Managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm'

The standards require and enable four main types of inspections which demand different levels of knowledge and experience and are :

- Routine visual inspection
- Operational inspection
- Annual main inspection and
- Post – installation inspection

In addition to these inspections identified within the standards other recognised inspections are utilised in helping to ensure the safe operation of a play environment

- Post- accident inspections
- Pre-installation consultation and
- Mid –installation surveillance