

Annual Inspection of play space and apparatus
West Felton Parish Council
Shropshire
Tedsmore Road Playground

Date May 23rd 2017

This inspection was carried out by

John Hicks. M.A. (Oxon) RPII Annual Inspector - Registration number 1016A

Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate number 001510554890

Date of issue 23rd November 2015

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. This inspection was carried through within the requirements and advice of British Standard (BS) EN1176 2008 Parts 1-7 inclusive as well as BS EN 1177 Now fully implemented but not retrospective in effect. Procedures adopted are those incorporated in *The Playground Inspection and Maintenance Manual* – John Hicks 2nd edition 2005
2. Inspections employ entirely non dismantling procedures
3. While the suppliers might prescribe advised ages for use the equipment on site is available to all and access for all ages is limited only by 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 does not entirely meet current requirements relating to the marking of equipment,* and so in this respect fails to meet the current standard (BSEN 1176 1.7). No risk arises from this situation which is general throughout the industry.
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. No formal risk assessment has been made but Indications of risk as highlighted 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. 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.

- 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

This inspection has been done two months out of time because there is a logistical problem associated with it.

In former times the company had a sufficient number of councils on the inspection list to average out time and travel costs between them but some five years ago there was a shift to a centrally organised county provided service and numbers of councils moved over onto it. As a consequence we progressively lost the bulk of our contracts so that at the present time only West Felton and Sellatyn and Gobowan utilise the service. Now this week Gobowan had to have a Post Installation Inspection (PII) and so we brought forward the annual inspection to coincide with this and so save them the cost of the August annual inspection.

It appeared absurd to pass West Felton and so the inspection was completed but there is no invoice attached to this report since we have no contract for work at this time. It seems improbable that there will be opportunities to inspect your play area 'in passing' and so we since we cannot make a full economic charge for a visit we also cannot undertake to complete the inspection within the normal time frame

You are then offered this report either as a premature service or else as a gift but in any case we advise you to explore alternative suppliers for the future

The degree to which new housing is evidently being developed locally along with indications of further development suggests that there will be a greatly increased demand for play opportunities locally over the next year or so. 'Planning Gain' will potentially fund this and other related social amenities but we advise development, if it is to occur, to be located elsewhere in the community because this site is already developed to a sustainable and appropriate level

A new and extended list of technical terms and general advice is attached to the report

This play area serves the needs of children aged 7-12 and, if accompanied, some younger children.

Hedges and fences in sound order and while sight lines have improved over recent years the hedges are now virtually as high as ever. Advise further work on this in the autumn.

Numbers of new play items added to the site over recent times remain in sound order and are plainly well used.

Post Installation Inspection (PII) findings as described in an earlier report are again assumed to be to hand for insurance and other liability purposes.

The note on wood rot and decay previously provided has on-going application .

Access

Via a steep short path from a 'kissing gate'

The whole area is fenced and hedged and access to the equipment is over 50metres of close cut grass.

Signs

Limited and largely relating to dogs

Seats

Two recently acquired picnic tables! + benches.

Some logs which serve as seats as well as balance beams and as features in an extended adventure trail

Litter bins

Two

Cleanliness

Satisfactory overall.

The equipment

1. Junior swings - Roundaplay

There is slight chain wear and seat edges show signs of damage Monitor. Low risk

Surfacing

Perforated sheet on grass – sinking and so less effective. Low risk

2. Cradle seat swings

There is minimal chain wear. Monitor. Low risk.

One last year new There is characteristic crack damage to one crotch bar as well as fading or the orange coloured surface material. Low risk

Surfacing

Perforated sheet on grass. Sinking and relaying as well as extension of the safety surface to a minimum of two metres might be prudent

3. Adventure trail Roundaplay Ten elements

This is an accessible and a user friendly item but there are potential finger traps in chain links. Low risk..

As previously reported there is here and elsewhere evident of deep strimmer cutting and there is some rotting in the balance beams and stepping stones – monitor and check regularly as advised in the last report.

Chain sections on the bridge and log walk ground in normal use. Low risk but it reduces play value considerably and creates potential trip points

Also monitor securing points in timber sections. Low risk.

Surfacing

Grass Low risk.

4 Spring Toy 1 Bird

This item 'grounds' front and rear under moderate load and leans to one side Loose ground fixing which might be partially caused by the dried out surrounding soil. Low/medium risk.

This is a user friendly item but access will prove difficult for some

Surfacing

Grass deeply troughed

5. Spring toy 2 M/cycle

Ground fixing moves under load and cracks evident – see above.

This is potentially a user friendly item but access will prove difficult for some

Surfacing

Grass. Troughed

6. Multi play unit

The item fails Grip/grasp requirements. Low risk

There is a clothing entrapment potential (Toggle trap) Low risk

Monitor splits in timber sections and follow up on the advice offered previously.

This is potentially a user friendly item but access will prove difficult for some

Surfacing

Perforated sheet on grass.

7. Bowl form spinner – Sutcliffe Play

Soundly and competently installed and judged fit for purpose.
An accessible and inclusive play item.

Surfacing

Perforated sheet on grass.

8. Boulders and logs laid out as a trail in 'Natural Play' form

There is no British Standard applicable to this item but see the earlier advisory note

Soundly and competently installed but there is very evident rotting here.

An accessible and inclusive play item.

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Surfacing

Grass.

9. Single point tyre swing with climbing bars - Lappsett

Soundly and competently installed and judged fit for purpose.
An accessible and inclusive play item.

There is rough surface material to both sides of the beam which looks like impact damage – not considered a hazard now but the cause should be investigated

Surfacing

Perforated sheet on grass.

10. Runway – generally described as an ‘Aerial flight’ or ‘Zip wire’

Sits low and tensioning and raising is advised. Low risk

Surfacing

Perforated composition sheet material commonly referred to as ‘grass mat’ at a notional 20mm thickness A wear strip rather than a safety surface - See the earlier report

11. Quad flyer – Sutcliffe

Soundly and competently installed
An overhead roundabout for the teenage market

Surfacing

Perforated composition sheet material

12. Muga RPPS

Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAS) are in varying degrees of sophistication merely games walls providing a mini multi-sport arena for up to eight sports, at relatively low cost.

Surfacing

In sound order as found but there is evidence of mole activity nearby

Tarmac

13. Three items of exercise equipment – Wicksteed Skier, surfer and walker.

Not play equipment and so only marginally subject to BS EN 1176 requirements but see the very extensive notes attached to the last report.

All in sound working order as found apart from the skier which has a slightly eccentric action and clicks at some points in its movement – loosening coonecyttors or a need for lubrication?

In this inspector's view very worthwhile since these items provide a useful addition to community resources were it not for the location See the earlier brief note – more information is available on my web sites.

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Technical and other terms in general use

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 700mm 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 grass in sound order is an excellent 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. Mulch Rubber strips, generally from old tyres bound with a resin compound and serving as an impact attenuating surface, subject to testing and certification evidence, and providing all weather access to equipment.
17. 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
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

