

Inspection of Bright Sparks Playgroup at Empingham

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

Inspection date: 30 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive excited to greet their friends and play in the homely, warm environment staff have created. They build close relationships with all staff. Children settle quickly and feel secure enough to put their own comforters away, happily seeking a cuddle from staff for reassurance when needed. Children learn a breadth of skills and knowledge from staff during daily routines. At snack time, children learn good hygiene practices and help staff to spray and clean the table. They follow staff's instructions and count how many children are sitting and waiting patiently, then hand the correct number of cups and plates to them. Staff help children to pour their drink carefully and remind them to pass the jug to others. They praise children for using their manners when responding to others and reiterate why it is important to be kind and caring.

Children enjoy listening to staff read books and develop a love of stories and traditional tales. Staff support children in acting out a bear hunt as a group while they listen carefully to staff read a story to them in an interactive way outside. Children giggle as they suggest the bear could be hiding in a tree. They imitate staff by using their hands as binoculars. Staff help children grow their confidence in speaking as they join in with familiar phrases and encourage children to ask questions about the bear and its habitat. Staff help children develop their imagination by discussing how snow and wind would affect their bodies. They encourage children to demonstrate how their bodies would move in this weather.

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

- Staff play alongside children to find out what they already know and can do, as well as identify what each child needs to learn next. They share ideas on how to best support these next steps in children's learning with the rest of the staffing team. All staff know the children well, including their personalities and experiences outside of the pre-school, and are particularly attentive to children's care needs.
- Staff use what children are interested in and what they want children to learn next to plan a wide range of activities. For example, staff create a water tray with different objects in it to support children with their ability to tip and pour. Staff develop the environment so that it helps children to make choices in their play, such as providing ducks, funnels, food colouring and other resources for children to add to the water play. However, sometimes when children take activities in a different direction to those planned by staff, staff do not adapt their interactions well enough to help children make the most progress from their play.
- Staff interact well with children and support them to develop their communication and language. They ask children carefully thought-through

questions to encourage children to share their ideas and views. Staff teach older children new vocabulary and concepts. Younger children develop their accuracy in pronouncing key words and phrases as staff repeat them clearly and regularly. However, some staff do not always give children enough time to think and respond during interactions. The manager has identified this and is providing ongoing training and support for staff, but this is not yet effective at raising the quality of some staff's practice.

- Staff share their expectations and boundaries clearly so that children understand them and can follow them. When children want to play with the same resource, staff help them to negotiate and explain to their friends how they are feeling.
- Staff encourage children and praise them for their achievements, which supports children to want to try things independently. For example, staff guide children on how to safely use equipment outside and suggest how they can develop their balance, spatial awareness and coordination. Children share their pride and tell staff, 'Look, I can do it now.'
- Since the last inspection, the manager has undertaken a broad range of professional development and engaged with support from other agencies. She has developed her knowledge and understanding of how children learn and implemented a more effective curriculum. The manager has put procedures in place to monitor her staff's practice to identify what staff need to work on next and has started to put training in place for them.
- Staff's relationships with parents, carers and children's extended family are at the heart of the service they provide. They continually seek out ways to communicate children's developmental journey with parents, including sharing pictures of activities and newsletters with updates about the current curriculum focus. Parents comment that staff make it a 'home from home' setting and go 'above and beyond' for children in their care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- strengthen staff's ability to adapt their focus and respond appropriately when children begin to lead their own learning during planned activities, so that interactions during these activities support all children to make the most progress
- embed further the professional development staff are provided, to improve the consistency of staff interactions and practice.

Setting details

Unique reference number	254363
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10320592
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	21
Number of children on roll	11
Name of registered person	Healey, Gail
Registered person unique reference number	RP908500
Telephone number	01572 812124
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2023

Information about this early years setting

Bright Sparks Playgroup at Empingham registered in 1992 and is located in Empingham, 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 staff and children of all ages throughout the setting.
- The inspector held discussions with leaders 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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