

# **PLAY AREA SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT**

**For Tattersett Parish Council**

On 27th January 2022

Play Area, Blenheim Road, Wicken Green, Norfolk



**An independent safety assessment of the playground and equipment by**

David Bracey ILAM Dip.

David Bracey Play Safety Inspections

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David Bracey has been inspecting since 2004, several thousands of sites have been successfully inspected. David has thirty years previous experience in Local Government working in Parks, Playground, Leisure and Environmental Management. He was a Play Inspector for Rospa between 2004 -11, and now concentrates working for his own company.

The company provide convenient and timely inspections undertaken by a Fully Independent Inspector, which guarantees a sensible approach and impartial report with no personal interest other than the safety of the facility. No links to any manufacturer or installer means a Fully Independent Inspection is given.

David Bracey is qualified to Rpii Annual Inspector Standard, which is the highest level. Has passed a Criminal Disclosure Check and holds Full Professional Indemnity and Public Liability Insurance.

# The following forms an integral part of the inspection report

## Reading it may save you unnecessary expenditure

1. The equipment has been assessed, as relevant, in accordance with BS EN 1176: "Playground Equipment", BS EN 15312 (Sports Areas) and BS EN 14974 (Wheeled Sports)

The BS EN1176 was published on 1 January 1999 when existing standards were withdrawn. There are a number of areas where existing equipment may fail the standard. **This does not mean that equipment has suddenly become dangerous or that remedial action is required. Generally equipment that fails BS EN 1176 but passed the previous standard BS 5696 at time of installation should be considered safe (excluding any maintenance issues).**

Where there is a compliance failure, this is briefly noted and a risk assessment made of the failure. **Where we believe action is required this is indicated in more detail and identified as a medium or high risk.** (See paragraph 13). Where no action is indicated, in our opinion there is no practical economic action that can be taken and the risks do not justify removal of the item.

Low risk items should be monitored and if accidents occur, remedial action will be required (There is no such thing as NO risk).

**Standard compliance is not mandatory or retrospective.**

2. The inspections cover:

Site safety

Suitability and conditions of ancillary items

Standard compliance, suitability and condition of equipment

Dimensional compliance, suitability and condition of surfacing

The report indicates the condition of the play area at the time of inspection. Subsequent events such as weather conditions, usage, or vandalism etc. may affect the condition of the play area. Routine inspections should be undertaken by the operator to monitor the effects of these.

3. Standard assessment is undertaken where appraisal may be made without dismantling or destruction.
4. The inspections are non-dismantling inspections. Where it is felt that removal of parts for assessment is required, this will be indicated. (See paragraph 13). It is not possible to check for internal corrosion/rot without dismantling the equipment.
5. Surfacing has been assessed solely in terms of the area covered and its condition or security.
6. Where there is open water within easy walking distance of the play area it is recommended that a water safety report be commissioned (David Bracey Play Safety Inspections can undertake this).
7. Where there are trees within falling distance of the play area it is recommended that a report on the integrity of the tree is obtained from a competent arboricultural expert (see [www.trees.org.uk](http://www.trees.org.uk) for list of qualified consultants)
8. Where no protective surface is provided with items which have a fall height in excess of 600mm, the installation of a protective surface should be considered. Such surfacing is not mandatory but does represent good practice. It should be noted that BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177 allow well-maintained grass for fall heights of up to 1500mm.

9. Surfacing up to a fall height of 600mm does not require testing for impact absorbency.
10. In addition to inspecting the equipment and surfacing, the inspection also looked at ancillary items and general design features where relevant to safety.
11. Wear to shackle pins and bushes on swings is difficult to detect on non-dismantling inspections. Checks are made to identify excessive movement in the 'D' shackle and where dry bearings are obvious. Whilst this action can often identify serious defects it does not preclude the possibility of shackle pin failure in rare circumstances. It is recommended that random inspection by removal of the 'D' shackle and pin is carried out as a regular maintenance feature in the site owner's work programme.
12. It should be noted that this is a safety report, not a standard compliance report, and compliance/non compliance with EN1176 is normally indicated. However failures may not be mentioned where they are very minor, or of a technical nature, and have no noticeable effect on safety.
13. A risk assessment of faults and Standard failures is given in terms of low, medium and high. **As a general principle items marked as "low" only require monitoring.** Items marked as "medium" require appropriate action within resources and individual site assessment. **Items marked as "high" require urgent action.** In rare cases where an item is likely to result in major injury or death, the operator or appropriate representative will be notified from the site by telephone. This will be indicated on the report.
14. There can be problems with assessing ground decay where synthetic surfaces have been installed. Similar problems may occur with sub-surface degradation. While care is taken to check ground decay and corrosion in supports, this cannot be done fully without removal and destruction of the surface.
15. In order to provide economic reports, standard wording is used for most common standard/maintenance failures. The inspector also works using previous year's reports (where available). **This may mean that where there have been few changes to the site, the current report may be similar to the previous year's report.**
16. The Disability Discrimination Act applies to play areas. There is a duty, where practicable, to make reasonable provision for equal opportunities for disabled people. David Bracey Play Safety Inspections can advise on this.
17. The Management of Health and Safety Regulations require a risk assessment of the play area for risks to users. This is a highly specialised subject. A risk assessment is included in the report, although it is normally recommend that such formal risk assessments be undertaken every 4-5 years.



## **Inspection Scope for RPII Annual Inspectors**

This document outlines the RPII scope for inspections undertaken by the Inspectors listed as Annual Inspectors on the RPII Register of Inspectors when undertaking Indoor Annual, Outdoor Annual, Outdoor Operational and Outdoor Routine inspections.

Inspections are undertaken with reference to the standards listed in this preamble only; where no date for the standard is given it will be the standard that is current at the time of inspection except where overlap periods are granted by the standards committee when standards are updated. The information contained in reports is provided to assist the owner/operator in fulfilling their responsibilities as detailed in the relevant standard. Other standards referenced within the listed standards do not form part of the inspection, unless they are also explicitly listed here.

The following standards are relevant to all installations of equipment that are publicly accessible to users; this includes public parks, pay and play parks, schools, nurseries, public houses, holiday parks, indoor play centres, farm parks etc. All equipment used or employed in publicly accessible areas should meet with the requirements of the relevant standards (listed below):

BS EN 1176 Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 & 11 Playground equipment intended for permanent installation outdoors & indoors.

BS EN 1176 Part 7 - 'Guidance on Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation' (this document gives guidance to the owners/operators of the facility on the installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playground equipment, excluding ancillary items).

In the United Kingdom the National Foreword forms an important part to the understanding and implementation of the recommendations set out in this document. It clarifies the application of the document within the UK as best practice guidance, as the document has been used since its initial publication. Therefore, in the UK this standard (BS EN 1176 – Part 7) contains no requirements and needs to be read and implemented as guidance, with the use of the term 'shall' therefore becoming a recommendation, as in the term 'should'.

Domestic play equipment falls outside of the scope of BS EN 1176 and has its own standards (BS EN 71 series – Safety of Toys). Where domestic equipment can be identified this will be acknowledged in the report but any comments concerning compliance will follow the requirements and recommendations of BS EN 1176.

When water play items, including spray parks, are inspected any comments concerning compliance within the inspection will refer to EN 1176. We have not assessed these against the requirements of EN 17232 (Water play equipment and features).

Other equipment that is not clearly identified as unsupervised or domestic (natural play, self-build equipment etc.) will be assessed for compliance with the relevant standard listed below:

**BS EN 15312** Free access multi-sports equipment

**BS EN 14974** Skateparks

**BS EN 16630** Permanently installed outdoor fitness equipment

**BS EN 16899** Parkour equipment (plus RPII/API guidance notes)

Annual and Post Installation inspections will take into consideration compliance with these current standards, and defects related to wear and vandalism. Items not listed in the report have not been included in the inspection. The inspection will cover the playground equipment and the active area (that area which is obviously part of the playground), nominally up to three metres around, the fence line if closer, or other areas as agreed.

Operational inspections only take into consideration defects related to cleanliness, equipment ground clearances, ground surface finishes, exposed foundations, sharp edges, missing parts, excessive wear (of moving parts) structural integrity, wear and vandalism.

Routine visual inspections relate only to the most obvious defects such as broken or missing parts, litter, vandalism and issues created by severe weather conditions (the intention is to identify hazards created by storm damage).

All inspections are non-dismantling, non-destructive and do not include any structural, toxicology or impact assessments defined in the standard; however, the inspector will undertake a manual test for stability and if equipment fails under manual load, or any other hazard is identified as an unacceptable risk, the owner/operator will be notified as soon as practicably possible.

The inspector will access all reasonably accessible equipment and will assess all reasonably accessible parts above the standing surface. Where it is not possible to access parts of the equipment without employing an alternative means of access the report will record the action required by the owner/operator to ensure the continued safe use of the equipment.

Ancillary equipment will be assessed using the inspector's knowledge and experience of the standards named in this document. (Note: Ancillary items are not included in the specific equipment-type parts of the EN 1176 series; hence they are not assessed for compliance with EN 1176 series and are subject to a general safety assessment).

The owner/operator is responsible for the overall safety of the equipment and area.

The inspector will not undertake any of the following works unless specifically agreed in writing at the time of order:

Checking the depth and underlying structural integrity of any surface areas and/or carrying out any testing of the impact attenuating properties of any surfaces; the identification of any corrosion, rot or other deterioration in any apparatus or equipment other than by an external inspection; the inspection of any equipment (or part thereof) that is beneath the playing surface (loose-fill materials may be moved to expose foundations); tightening any bolts, hinges or other fixing devices on any apparatus or equipment; assessing or inspecting any electrical installations contained on any site and/or apparatus and/or equipment; assessing or inspecting any water supplies and/or water features and/or any associated computerised systems (including carrying out any programming); where planting or trees are mentioned in the report no assessments of toxicity, suitability or

condition are undertaken – the owner/operator should have suitable inspections provided by a competent person.

The owner/operator should have a 'design risk assessment' provided by the manufacturer/designer of the area for the equipment and location in which the facility is installed.

The operator is responsible for managing risks of their provision and is required by law to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient assessment' of the risks associated with a site or activity. This inspection shall be considered as contributing to the operator's discharge of this responsibility.

The details contained within the report are a snapshot of the condition at the time of inspection only and subsequent events may affect the condition of the facility. Suggested remedial actions are based on the knowledge and experience of the inspector and/or that of the inspection company. The owner/operator should always seek the advice of the manufacturer or a competent person when undertaking repairs and/or modifications to equipment.

**Table 1**

The operator is responsible for following the guidance of the relevant standards. The standards give guidance on the installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of the various types of facilities. The inspection guidance is listed in Table 1, with an indication of which parts will be included in an RPII Annual or Post-Installation Inspection. The relevant standards also contain additional parts which the operator should follow.

<b>Inspection Recommendations of relevant standards</b> Refer to relevant standards for full text	Annual Main	RPII Annual/ Post Installation Inspection
6.1 d) Overall levels of safety of equipment (see note 1)	✓	✓ [1]
6.1 d) Overall levels of safety of foundations (see note 1)	✓	✓[1]
6.1 d) Overall levels of safety of playing surfaces (see note 2)	✓	✓[2]
6.1 d) Compliance with the relevant parts of the standard and or risk assessment (see note 3)	✓	✓[3]
6.1 d) Effects of weather	✓	✓
6.1 d) Presence of rot, decay or corrosion (see note 1)	✓	✓[1]
6.1 d) Assessment of repairs made or added or replaced components (see note 4)	✓	✓[4]
6.1 d) Excavation or dismantling/additional measures	✓	✗
6.2.1 Assessment of glass reinforced plastics (see note 5)	✓	✓[5]
6.2.1 Inspection of one post equipment (see note 1)	✓	✓[1]
6.2.4 Undertaking the Operators inspection protocol	✓	✗

NB: The clause numbers in table 1 are taken from BS EN 1176 - Part 7:2020. The content is equally applicable to all other relevant standards listed herein. Playgrounds contain a range of equipment from different manufacturers and installed over a number of years; operators should implement any guidance provided by the manufacturer. Item specific detail is not readily available to RPII Playground Inspectors, whose report contributes to the operator's overall Annual Main Inspection as detailed in the relevant

[1] A manual test only is undertaken for stability. Wear and instability are only detectable where readily apparent without dismantling or destruction and without the use of tools, excavation or specialist equipment. Rot and corrosion are tested or with a hammer and/or steel rod. Decay in timber may exist which can only be found with specialist equipment.

[2] Only the visible condition and dimensional compliance of surface extent is considered. Neither testing of impact attenuating properties nor measurement of the thickness of bound surfaces are undertaken on RPII annual inspections.

[3] The inspection assesses compliance where this can be tested on site using manual methods without dismantling, destruction and without the use of tools or specialist equipment.

[4] The operator should use manufacturer's recommended parts, or equivalent. We are unable to verify if such parts have been used, and any subsequent change in quality or performance.

[5] Visible glass fibres will be noted in reports. The operator is responsible for repairs or replacement.



**Name of site:** Play Area, Blenheim Road, Wicken Green  
**Client:** Tattersett Parish Council  
**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
**Inspector:** David Bracey

### **Site Comments**

The playground, which serves a housing area is in a good condition and appears to be well maintained.

Maintenance is required as noted in report.

### **Timber Play Equipment**

It has been noticed recently by Rpii inspectors, that timber play equipment in the UK, is increasingly suffering from fungal and rot attack possibly due to environmental changes such as mild and wet weather conditions.

Inspectors and clients have seen timber posts snap off, where no external rot has been detected visually or by resonance testing. This is a worrying situation.

It is therefore advised that all clients check all wooden play equipment regularly other than the Annual Inspection. Apart from probing with a thin blade, to see if water egress is found or softness in the timber, a forceful push on the timber may be needed to test the soundness of the item.

### **Site and Ancillary Items**

The following items have been inspected and found to be in good order:

Access  
Cleanliness  
Traffic Clashes - users  
General Surface – Grass  
Paving



Signs ‘No Dogs’



Road sign



Road side barriers



Main Access Gate – Locked



## **Work is required on the following:**

There is a legal requirement, under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957, 1984 to ensure that play areas have correct and adequate signage.

Signage can play an important role in providing information to users for the purposes of reporting accidents and damage.

Play area signage should include:

Contact details to report damage or accidents. Where the client has a permanent office this should include the telephone number and/or email address. Where a clerk works from home the use of a telephone number may not be appropriate.

To assist emergency services using sat nav, it is recommended to add the post code of the play area.

Where the play area is near a road the use of triangular warning road signs(two running children) to warn motorists of the presence of a playground should be considered. One sign is in place but the other access has no sign – Recommend add Road sign to cover this access.



Any notices regarding age of users should be carefully worded so that it does not imply that the area is safe for all users of that age. For instance a 12 year old may have the mental and physical capabilities of a 3 year old. Something that implies that the area is safe for all children over the age, say, of 7 would imply that it is also safe for this child and could result in litigation in the event of an accident. A bald statement such as 'This area is to be used by children under 8 only' is to be preferred. Alternatively, a sign stating the design age of the equipment may be the better option.



Litter Bin x 1 – Full – Recommend review emptying frequencies - Low risk.



Picnic Bench – Recommend replace missing slat and smooth down damaged areas - Low to Medium risk.





Mature trees in play area – Recommend to inspect annually by a qualified arboriculturist and to remove any dead, diseased and damaged wood. It is recommended not to use the play area in high winds.





## **PLAY EQUIPMENT:**

### **Item: Basket Swing (2600mm) - NGF**



#### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The item meets the requirements of EN1176 where this may be tested on site without dismantling or destruction.

#### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

No remedial maintenance work is required at this time.

#### **Surfacing: Matting**

#### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The surfacing meets the dimensional requirements of EN 1176.

#### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

This type of safety surface should have grass present to provide adequate protection in user falls, as the grass roots absorb the impact of any falls. The surface therefore does not give the same protection as with grass and the risk of damage to users in falls is increased.

In the first instance it is recommended to raise the swing seats to 635mm (from safety surface to bottom of seat) and spread seed and soil mix over the worn area – if this fails to eliminate wear from dragging feet serious consideration should be given to replacing this surface with a non-wearing type of safety surface such as Bonded Rubber Crumb or Wet Pour – Low to Medium risk.





## **Item: 1 Bay 1 Flat/1 Cradle Seat Swing ( 2600mm) - NGF**



### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The item meets the requirements of EN1176 where this may be tested on site without dismantling or destruction.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommend**

No remedial maintenance is required at this time.

### **Surfacing: Matting**

### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The surfacing meets the dimensional requirements of EN 1176.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

This type of safety surface should have grass present to provide adequate protection in user falls, as the grass roots absorb the impact of any falls. The surface therefore does not give the same protection as with grass and the risk of damage to users in falls is increased.

In the first instance it is recommended to raise the swing seats to 635mm (from safety surface to bottom of seat) and spread seed and soil mix over the worn area – if this fails to eliminate wear from dragging feet serious consideration should be given to replacing this surface with a non-wearing type of safety surface such as Bonded Rubber Crumb or Wet Pour – Low to Medium risk.



## **Item: Toddler Slide - NGF**



### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The item meets the requirements of EN1176 where this may be tested on site without dismantling or destruction.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

No remedial maintenance work is required at this time.

### **Surfacing: Matting**

### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The surfacing meets the dimensional requirements of EN 1176.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

The surfacing is in satisfactory condition and no work is required at this time.

### **Item: Type 2a Rocker – Springy Dog - Fahr**



#### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The item meets the requirements of EN1176 where this may be tested on site without dismantling or destruction.

#### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

No remedial maintenance is required at this time.

#### **Surfacing: Matting**

#### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The surfacing meets the dimensional requirements of EN 1176.

#### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

The surfacing is in satisfactory condition and no work is required at this time.

## **Item: Small Size Goals x 2**



### **BS8462:2005 + A1:2012 and BS 8461:2005 Compliance**

The item meets the requirements of BS 8462:2005 + A1:2012 and BS 8461:2005 where this may be tested on site without dismantling or destruction.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

No remedial maintenance is required at this time.

### **Surfacing: Grass**

### **EN 1176 Compliance**

The surfacing meets the dimensional requirements of EN 1176.

### **Repair / Maintenance recommended**

Recommend repair worn grass when conditions allow (or move goals periodically) – Low risk.





## Risk Assessment Evaluation

**Client:** Tattersett PC

**Site:** Play Area, Blenheim Road, Wicken Green

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**Type:** Toddler/Junior/Sport

Risk Score	Risk Categories
1 -3	Very Low Risk -Monitor
4 -7	Low Risk – Monitor and take reasonable action if possible
8 - 12	Medium Risk – Take action to reduce if possible, or available
13 - 20	High Risk – Take Action immediately and access control measures
21 +	Unacceptable Risk – Remove or immobilise before taking immediate action and assessment of control measures

### Ancillary Items and Environmental or Other Hazards

Ancillary Items	Risk Score	Comments	Action or Control
Access	2		Monitor
Main Gate	3		Monitor
Litter Bin	5		See Report
General Surface - Grass	2		Monitor
Signs	6		See Report
Picnic Bench	7		See Report
Paving	3		Monitor
Planting	6		See Report

Environmental Hazards	Risk Score	Action, Comment or Control Recommended
Free/Fall Space	3	Monitor
Traffic Clashes	3	Monitor
Design Defects	3	Monitor
Cleanliness	2	Monitor



## Equipment and Surfacing

Equipment Items	Surface	Risk Score	Action, Control or Comments
Basket Swing	Matting	7	See Report
Flat/Cradle Swing	Matting	7	See Report
Toddler Slide	Matting	4	Monitor
Springy Dog	Matting	3	Monitor
Small Size Goals	Grass	6	See Report

Risk assessment evaluation should be read in conjunction with Annual or Post Installation reports. Where action or control relates to maintenance, non-compliance or minor defects read Annual Inspection or Post Installation reports for detailed comments. Serious or high risk failures should, however, be noted. Failure to comply with the standards will be identified in the reports.

Design, location and physical site factors may determine the overall risk of the site. These may be difficult to change economically, However, where maintenance or control methods are undertaken the site could be reduced to **LOW** Risk subject to a future inspection and reassessment.

***ASSESSED LEVEL OF RISK FOR THE PLAYGROUND AT THE TIME OF INSPECTION WAS LOW TO MEDIUM RISK***