

Press release: Playground reinstated after ground collapse

Pupils at an infant school in Derbyshire are 'back on the right lines' after the final touches have been made to their playground, which had been affected by historical coal mining.

On Friday 13 October 2017 new game markings were drawn onto the playground of Elmsleigh Infant and Nursery School in Swadlincote, Derbyshire.



One of the children using the playground

Over 200 pupils at the school were left without a playground in May 2017 when a seemingly small dip on the surface of the tarmac turned into a small ground collapse.

The Coal Authority, which deals with the legacy of Britain's coal mining, confirmed that the hole was the result of past coal mining and quickly began repairs. The collapse was initially infilled with stone before drilling was undertaken to ascertain the extent of the problem in an area where coal was known to occur within a shallow coal seam or outcrop.

Drilling revealed the extent of the collapse and it was designated as being a shallow unrecorded shaft – a possible bell pit. Shallow workings were also found under the remainder of the playground and so the Coal Authority capped the shaft with a reinforced concrete slab and also filled the old workings

with concrete grout.

The initial work was completed during the first week of the summer holidays, but the pupils were still without the final repairs – the markings geared for outdoor play on the ground. At all times the pupils safety was of utmost concern and alternative provisions were made to ensure all children had access to outdoor play.

Specialist contractors working on behalf of the Coal Authority reinstated the markings, including a rainbow and number squares that have been designed by the youngsters themselves.



A playground decoration

Alan Hines, Project Manager for the Coal Authority, said the markings will bring an end to the repair work.

He said:

It will be good to see the playground finished with new markings that have been designed by both children and parents. This will bring a very nice end to an incident, which saw both the playground and the markings ruined.

Charlotte Hancock, the school's Business Assistant, said the work will be the final part of the repair programme. She said:

The event was quite surprising.

A small dip in the playground on a Friday had turned into a hole by Monday. Fortunately, no one was hurt during the incident but it left the children without their large playground.

The playground was reinstated over the summer holidays and all the children then needed were some new markings that would let them play their games during break times.



A butterfly playground decoration