



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Knighton Three's  
Knighton  
Powys  
LD7 1HP**

**Date of inspection: January 2016**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the setting's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>What the judgement means</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
<b>Good</b>	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
<b>Adequate</b>	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

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## Context

Knighton Threes Playgroup is an English medium setting, which serves the rural town of Knighton and the surrounding area. It is located on the Knighton Church in Wales Primary School site.

Nearly all children have English as their home language. None of the children are from Welsh speaking homes and a few children have English as an additional language. A very few children have additional learning needs.

The setting is registered to take 24 children and is open every weekday. At the time of the inspection, 18 children attended. All are aged three and are funded by the local authority. There are three members of staff, including the playgroup leader. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. The playgroup leader has been in post since November 2015. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) last inspected the setting in January 2016 and Estyn last inspected it in January 2011.

## Summary

<b>The setting's current performance</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>The setting's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Adequate</b>

### Current performance

The setting is adequate because:

- Children like coming to the setting, feel secure and settle quickly
- Relationships between peers, and adults and children are respectful
- Children are cared for and supported well by the adults in the setting
- The setting's practice ensures that children eat healthily and engage in physical activity on a daily basis
- Many children are able to talk about their likes and dislikes and communicate competently with peers and adults
- A majority of children are able to listen and participate in action songs and rhymes enthusiastically
- The setting implements the Foundation Phase curriculum to plan a broad range of activities appropriately

However:

- Opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills are not planned systematically and lack appropriate challenge
- Children do not use Welsh language well enough in spontaneous play
- Assessment of children's learning and skills development is not robust and does not provide a clear picture of their achievements and progress
- Children's views on their individual achievements and targets for improvement are not included in the assessment process

### Prospects for improvement

The setting's prospects for improvement are adequate because:

- The recently appointed leader has a clear vision for the setting based on providing effective care and education for all the children
- A strong ethos of working as a team permeates the setting
- The setting's development plan outlines suitable improvement targets that link well with national priorities
- In a relatively short time, the setting has begun to develop a suitable understanding of its strengths and areas for development
- The setting has good relationships with parents, the school and other outside agencies

However:

- The setting's practices for self-evaluation are too informal, and do not focus well enough on evaluating the standards children achieve

- The setting's priorities do not focus well enough on improving outcomes for children
- Systems for staff reviews are too informal and are not used to inform future priorities for improvement

## Recommendations

- R1 Improve children's standards in literacy, numeracy and Welsh
- R2 Ensure that planning develops children's skills and knowledge systematically at an appropriately challenging level and includes children's suggestions
- R3 Develop an assessment system that allow practitioners to identify children's progress and achievements accurately
- R4 Develop effective systems for staff appraisal that link improvement targets to the setting's strategic aims
- R5 Ensure that self-evaluation and action planning focus on outcomes for children

### What happens next?

The setting will draw up an action plan that shows how it is going to address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the setting's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

**Adequate**

#### **Standards: Adequate**

Many children make suitable progress in developing their skills and understanding in line with their age and ability. A majority of children make satisfactory progress in planned sessions and are capable of recalling previous learning when prompted by an adult. A majority of children are able to apply their communication skills appropriately in a range of contexts.

A majority of children are able to listen and respond appropriately to stories and are able to discuss events in the stories read to them confidently. However, a minority of children find it difficult to concentrate and disengage from listening. Most children are able to listen to and follow requests and instructions from adults consistently. During circle-time most children listen and respond to greetings in Welsh consistently. A majority of children join in with singing familiar songs and show enjoyment when participating in action songs and rhymes. Many children are able to talk about their likes and dislikes and communicate competently with peers and adults, for example when using their senses to describe different fruits. However, very few children choose to look at books during free play. Most children use paints and paintbrushes willingly to create pictures, but very few choose to mark make using other media.

Many children join in with whole class counting. A majority of children can match and count objects reliably to 5. A few, more able children can count objects to 10. Many children are developing basic mathematical language appropriately. They use suitable comparative vocabulary, such as longer, smaller and bigger, when comparing size and length in practical activities, for example when describing dinosaur toys. A minority of children are able to discuss the concepts of forwards and backwards and under and over and join in with sequencing the days of the week. However, many children do not make enough progress in using their numeracy skills across the areas of learning.

Most children are developing a basic understanding of Welsh vocabulary and many children respond with simple, one word, greetings independently. Around half of the children join in willingly when singing familiar Welsh songs as a class. However, very few children use Welsh unless directed by an adult.

Overall, children's competence when using information and communication technology (ICT) is developing well. Most children can access a range of ICT equipment independently. Many confidently use a range of hand held devices to take photographs of themselves and their friends.

#### **Wellbeing: Good**

Nearly all children enter the setting enthusiastically and settle quickly. They are confident with the requirements of the daily routines and can access resources independently. Nearly all children enjoy their time in the setting and are able to communicate their likes and dislikes to familiar adults confidently.

Nearly all children take turns to greet and respond to peers in Welsh well during circle time.

Nearly all children are consistently well behaved. They are respectful to their peers and adults in the setting. Nearly all co-operate with one another successfully when engaging in small group activities. Nearly all children are able to share resources and take turns consistently well, such as when playing with the train track. However, few children work independently when engaging with planned activities.

<b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b>
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<b>Adequate</b>
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**Learning experiences: Adequate**

Practitioners provide children with a suitable range of learning activities and make satisfactory use of available resources. Planning is based on the Foundation Phase curriculum and includes regular opportunities for children to use the outdoor area. All practitioners collaborate in the planning process and contribute to the development of activities appropriately. However, planning for developing children's literacy and numeracy skills does not always build systematically on children's existing knowledge and skills. As a result planning does not always respond to all children's abilities and needs well enough.

Daily routines provide suitable opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. A wide range of story books are available for children to access independently. Signage in English and Welsh successfully develops children's understanding that print carries meaning. However, there are too few opportunities for children to develop their early mark-making skills.

Planning for children's numeracy skills is at an early stage of development. Practitioners provide a few worthwhile opportunities for children to count, sort and match objects. However, these are not always sufficiently challenging for children that are more able. There are appropriate opportunities to develop children's ICT skills using a suitable range of resources.

Practitioners provide regular opportunities for children to hear and to respond to the Welsh language during registration and when giving praise or instructions. They use a suitable range of Welsh songs and rhymes to help children in learning simple language patterns.

Learning activities are not adapted well enough to take account of suggestions from children. As a result, children have too few chances think for themselves, to solve problems and to become more independent learners.

Practitioners make limited use of visits and visitors to the setting. As a result, children's understanding of their locality and the world of work is under developed.

**Teaching: Adequate**

All practitioners are committed to supporting children and are eager to develop provision in order to meet children's individual needs. They make appropriate use of

a range of teaching strategies and employ a suitable range of questioning techniques to engage children. Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs, and interactions with children are respectful and caring. They have a suitable knowledge of the Foundation Phase curriculum and are good language models. Most practitioners intervene appropriately in children's play and demonstrate the use of resources when necessary. However, they do not have sufficiently high enough expectations of what children can achieve. As a result, children overly rely on adult support to engage fully with planned and free play activities. This limits development of their independent learning and problem solving skills.

Practitioners provide suitable verbal feedback whilst children are engaged in activities. Each week, practitioners formally assess one area of learning and make informal observations throughout the week. These are the subject for discussion during weekly planning meetings. However, on-entry assessment information is limited and does not link to Foundation Phase outcomes. Practitioners do not adopt a systematic approach to assessing children's achievements and progress. Consequently, planned activities do not always respond to all children's needs well enough. Children do not contribute to the assessment process and as a result are not aware of what they need to do to improve.

Parents and carers receive regular information about what their child will be learning about, with a flavour of the activities that will be undertaken. At the end of each session, parents and carers receive a briefing about the activities children have experienced that day. This enables them to have a suitable understanding of how they can support their child's learning.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The setting promotes children's health and wellbeing successfully. Children are actively encouraged to eat and drink healthily and have regular opportunities for physical exercise. Parents are effectively encouraged to support healthy eating arrangements when providing packed lunch for their children.

Practitioners skilfully guide children to behave well and to have respect for themselves, others and the environment. They successfully encourage children to share and care for one another. Arrangements for supporting children's personal, social and moral development have a positive impact on children's wellbeing. However, there are few opportunities for children to develop their understanding of other cultures.

The setting offers a safe and secure environment. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and give no cause for concern.

There are appropriate measures in place to support children with additional learning needs. Good relationships with specialist agencies help practitioners to set realistic targets and review the progress of children with additional learning needs satisfactorily.

The setting has successful transition arrangements in place that support children moving into the primary school.

### **Learning environment: Adequate**

The setting provides a welcoming and attractive environment where all children have equal access to all areas of learning. However, there is often little guidance and challenge for children when using these areas. Practitioners are suitably qualified and experienced in working with young children. Practitioners communicate their expectations for children's behaviour effectively. They successfully promote respect and care for others and, as a result, children feel secure and enjoy their time in the setting

Good quality resources match to children's stages of development appropriately and are available for children to access independently. However, practitioners do not always organise the room into defined areas of learning effectively enough. This limits children's opportunities for mark making and application of their numeracy skills across the areas of learning. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are safe and well maintained. However, the setting does not exploit the use of the local community to enrich learning experiences for children well enough.

<b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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### **Leadership: Adequate**

The setting's leader has very recently taken up the post and manages the setting efficiently on a day-to-day basis. She has a clear vision for the setting based on providing effective care and education for all the children. This, together with a strong ethos of working as a team, permeates the setting. Leaders ensure that all relevant policies are up-to-date and are understood by all practitioners. The setting has suitable arrangements for meeting with staff to discuss their practice. However, there are no formalised processes for setting targets for practitioners' improvement or for monitoring their effectiveness. As a result, leaders do not use these to inform future priorities for improvement or to challenge staff robustly enough.

Weekly meetings to discuss the setting's plans and activities for children enable effective team communication and develop practitioners' understanding of the week's learning activities appropriately. However, a lack of effective processes means that practitioners do not have a clear and accurate enough picture of children's standards, nor the progress they make while at the setting.

Past overviews of the setting and its work have been inconsistent. However, the setting's management committee and responsible person are developing more effective processes to oversee the running of the setting. For example, they now monitor more efficiently the number of staff at the setting and their working hours. However, they do not yet focus well enough on supporting and challenging the setting to make consistent progress against suitable improvement priorities that focus on the standards that children achieve.

### **Improving quality: Adequate**

In a relatively short time, the setting's leader has begun to develop a suitable understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the setting.

Practitioners meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the provision, such as lesson plans, and to discuss their observations about individual children. They make good use of reports from the local authority advisory teacher to help them identify and address a few areas for improvement. However, the setting's practices for self-evaluation are too informal and do not draw on a wide enough range of information. They do not focus well enough on evaluating the standards that children achieve and leaders do not monitor the quality of practitioners' interactions with children. As a result, self-evaluation procedures do not identify shortcomings at the setting robustly enough.

The setting's development plan outlines suitable improvement targets that link well with national priorities. It identifies effectively those responsible for leading actions and initiatives. However, the setting's priorities do not focus well enough on improving outcomes for children.

In recent years, the setting has not had effective improvement plans and, as a result, is not able to assess accurately how initiatives have improved standards for children. A minority of recommendations from the last inspection, such as developing children's Welsh language skills and their understanding of a wide range of different cultures and traditions, are still areas in which the setting needs to improve.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The setting has strong relationships with parents. It provides a useful range of information to them on children's activities and their responses. These include a helpful bulletin board, informative written reports and formal meetings to discuss their child's progress. As a result, parents feel well informed and are confident to speak to practitioners in order to share helpful information about their children.

The setting has effective practices that support children's transition to the local primary school. Links between the school and the setting are strong. Children at the setting have useful opportunities to use the school's facilities, such as the school hall, and opportunities to learn alongside the nursery children at the school, for example when engaging with a visitor who taught them about life in another country. They also undertake a series of helpful transition visits to the school's nursery class. As a result, nearly all children move on to the next stage of their education happily.

The setting has effective links with local colleges, national organisations and the local authority. These provide the setting with a range of supportive resources and guidance. However, the setting has few links with the local community to enhance children's learning.

### **Resource management: Adequate**

Leaders ensure that the setting has sufficient staff and that all practitioners are well qualified to work with young children. The setting generally uses resources effectively. All practitioners have access to, and have attended, a suitable range of training that links well with the setting's priorities, for example training on completing the Foundation Phase baseline profile. However, leaders have yet to implement this

training effectively enough. As a result, it has limited impact on improving the setting's planning and provision.

The setting's leader, responsible person and management committee have joint oversight of all financial matters and have comprehensive systems in place to keep expenditure under review. This ensures that the setting functions efficiently within an agreed budget.

When considering the standards achieved by many children, the setting provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent questionnaires

The number of responses received was fewer than 10. No data will be shown.

## Appendix 2

### The inspection team / reporting inspector

Mrs Amanda Malkin	Reporting Inspector
Mr Andrew Thorne	Team Inspector

### Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the setting and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

## Glossary of terms

<b>Areas of Learning</b>	<p>These are the seven areas that make up the Foundation Phase curriculum in English-medium settings. (Welsh-medium settings are not required to teach Welsh language development as this is already the language of the setting.) The Areas of Learning are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity</li> <li>• language, literacy and communications skills</li> <li>• mathematical development</li> <li>• Welsh language development</li> <li>• knowledge and understanding of the world</li> <li>• physical development</li> <li>• creative development</li> </ul>
<b>CSSIW</b>	<p>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) is a division of the Department of Public Services and Performance in the Welsh Government.</p>
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)</b>	<p>This local authority partnership approves settings as providers of education. It also has the power to withdraw funding from settings which do not comply with the partnerships conditions of registration.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase</b>	<p>The Welsh Government initiative that aims to provide a balanced and varied curriculum to meet the different developmental needs of young children from 3 to 7 years of age.</p>
<b>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile (CDAP)</b>	<p>Foundation Phase on-entry assessment profile; a statutory requirement in schools from September 2011 and settings from September 2012.</p>
<b>Local authority advisory teacher</b>	<p>These teachers provide regular support, guidance and training to non-maintained settings which provide education for three and four year olds.</p>
<b>Mudiad Meithrin</b>	<p>A voluntary organisation, which aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.</p>

<b>Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY)</b>	This is a professional membership association working with registered childminders to ensure local high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.
<b>National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)</b>	This organisation which aims to improve the development and education of children in their early years, by providing support services to members.
<b>Wales Pre-school Providers Association (WPPA)</b>	An independent voluntary organisation providing community based pre-school childcare and education.