

**A report on**  
**Knighton Threes Nursery**  
**Ludlow Road**  
**Knighton**  
**Powys**  
**LD7 1HP**

**Date of inspection: January 2011**

**by**

**Mr Peter Mathias**

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



INVESTORS | BUDDSODDWYR  
IN PEOPLE | MEWN POBL

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 school'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 Pre-School Unit is an English medium setting which serves the small town of Knighton and the immediate rural area. It is situated in the Knighton Primary School site where the provision includes a large classroom and two extensive outdoor areas, with a hard play area, a veranda and a further grassed area.

The children who attend are considered to be from neither advantaged nor disadvantaged backgrounds and to have levels of basic skills expected for their age. No child has English as an additional language. No child has Welsh as a first language and all come from English speaking Welsh backgrounds. Currently no child is identified as having additional learning needs (ALN).

The setting is open on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and Tuesday and Friday afternoons for children between the ages of three and four. The setting also provides privately for children aged two to three years on Monday afternoons and Tuesday and Friday mornings. The setting is registered for 24 children between two and five years of age.

The setting was last inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in April 2009.

It is the setting's first inspection by Estyn.

## Summary

<b>The school's current performance</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The school's prospects for improvement</b>	<b>Good</b>

### Current performance

The quality and standards of educational provision are appropriate and successfully promote the Foundation Phase outcomes for children's learning.

The setting is good because:

- all children make good progress and have well developed social skills;
- all children are developing confidence, independence and ability to make their own decisions;
- all practitioners plan and work together effectively and have a good understanding of the needs of children of this age;
- links with parents are strong and mutually beneficial;
- children's wellbeing is carefully fostered; and
- the unit is well led.

### Prospects for improvement

The prospects for improvement are good because:

- there is a very constructive relationship between the unit and the primary school to which children transfer;
- self-evaluation and strategic planning for improvement are rigorous and well established;
- the professional development of practitioners is well-organised; and
- the person responsible has a very good understanding of the needs of the setting and works closely with the person in charge to continue to effect improvements.

## Recommendations

- R1 continue to develop children's Welsh language skills;
- R2 extend further opportunities for children to utilise information communications technology (ICT) in their learning.
- R3 place greater emphasis on developing children's understanding of the wide range of different cultures and traditions which make up modern society; and

### What happens next?

The provider will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

## Main findings

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

**Good**

### **Standards: Good**

All children make good progress in nearly all areas of learning. Starting with levels of basic skills which are in line with those expected of children of their age, all achieve well. Nearly all make choices and decisions for themselves and independently move from one activity to another. They play constructively and experiment readily, applying new skills in different contexts successfully.

Nearly all children speak and listen to adults and to each other readily and are interested in what is going on around them. They repeat well known parts of stories and songs they have learnt. They respond appropriately to questions and make sensible suggestions. They know the names of their favourite stories and the characters in them. They know that books are looked at and read from left to right. Nearly all hold writing tools correctly and are beginning to understand that marks carry meaning. Many are beginning to form letter shapes and to 'write' their own names.

All children make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. They count accurately within 10, using English and Welsh. Nearly all compare and order objects by size and shape. They know the names of simple shapes and organise them carefully to create pictures. They experiment with water looking at the capacity of different containers and recognise 'more than' and 'less than'. Nearly all know the names of numbers and recognise them when expressed as symbols or in array.

Nearly all children know how to use a pretend telephone in their play. They recognise that a till is used by a shopkeeper to hold money and to calculate change. All use a camera to record themselves, for example when making soup. However, few have confidence to use a computer and to navigate through simple programs or to use a wider range of electronic means to enrich their learning.

Bearing in mind their starting points, nearly all children are making adequate progress in developing their Welsh language skills. All count confidently to 10 in Welsh and know simple commands. They describe how they feel in one or two words. They recognise and name primary colours in Welsh. However, nearly all do not use English and Welsh together or make longer responses. They are beginning to take part in action songs in Welsh, remembering the words with increasing confidence.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

All children have positive attitudes to learning and are confident in their play and when working with practitioners. They concentrate well and show a real interest in their activities and the success of others. They have a growing sense of their own

identity and the importance of choosing for themselves. They carry out simple tasks and routines readily.

Nearly all dress for the outdoors with little help from adults, putting on wellingtons and waterproofs independently. They are all conscious of their personal hygiene such as washing their hands after a visit to the toilet or when preparing to eat their healthy snacks. All know that milk and fruit are good for their bodies. They know that they should show care and kindness to each other and to their pets. All know that babies are precious and need to be looked after with love.

Nearly all have, for their age, well-developed skills in making decision about when they wish to move from one activity to another. They explain, for example, that they need more time to complete a task properly before beginning another.

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

The curriculum is in line with the Foundation Phase curriculum for children of this age. It is well-organised so that all children learn at first hand and build systematically on what they already know and can do through a wide range of stimulating and well-planned activities. All practitioners work closely together to ensure that the curriculum is well resourced and planned. In the shorter term, planning is modified or extended to meet changing needs, for example in order to reinforce skills which require further refinement.

All children have good opportunities to learn how to be independent and to be self-confident. They have good opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills both inside the setting and in the neighbourhood. For example, they adopted local lambs and know how to mother them. All children have regular opportunities to take on roles and to take part in imaginative play, for example when meeting with 'aliens' and travelling in their space station. They use the outdoors effectively in well-planned investigations of plants and animals.

Children learn how to be kind and considerate to each other and to respect their individual differences. However, there is limited provision for children to have experience of different ways of life and cultural traditions beyond their own.

Across the setting, children are provided with many good opportunities to develop their communication and numeracy skills and to apply these skills in many different activities.

All practitioners consistently and skilfully plan activities which encourage children to be inquisitive and to find answers to questions for themselves. However, insufficient thought is given to ensuring that children have opportunities to assess their own progress and to evaluate what they have done well or could improve.

Children have good opportunities to use their numeracy skills in counting, examining shapes, in creating sequences and in handling money in their role-play. They utilise their growing awareness of measure in investigations using water and sand.

Nearly all children are beginning to develop their skills in the use of ICT through the provision of appropriate opportunities to use cameras and telephones in their role-play. However, many are at an early stage of using a computer for a range of purposes in order to extend their learning further and to appreciate the use of ICT in other areas of their learning.

There is good provision for children to be aware of their Welsh identity and traditions. They have good opportunities to learn simple instructions, the names of colours and of numbers. They know how to express themselves in Welsh if they are happy or sad. However, opportunities are missed in the ongoing work of the setting to encourage the use of Welsh incidentally and to encourage children to respond in English and Welsh.

The setting has good provision for all children to recognise the importance of looking after the environment and for conserving resources. They are enthusiastic 'recyclers' and have good access to the outdoors to experience the natural world.

### **Teaching: Good**

The quality of teaching is good. All practitioners have a thorough understanding of how to plan and to organise and teach children of this age. They all hold high expectations of themselves and of what their children can achieve. A particular strength is the way in which all practitioners work cohesively as a team to support a wide range of activities which are carefully constructed to encourage independence.

All children are successfully encouraged to think for themselves by the skilful way in which questions are asked. They are given confidence to attempt new or unfamiliar experiences by the reassuring and supportive ways in which all children are treated.

All children are very well supported both within and outside the classroom. All practitioners have a good understanding of when to offer help and when to allow children to find out for themselves. Across the setting there is a good balance between child centred and adult led activities, in which the tasks are well-matched to the different abilities. Those with greater maturity or ability are thoughtfully extended.

Long and short-term assessments and record keeping are well-organised. They provide a clear picture of the progress children are making. The information gathered as a result of observations and ongoing note taking is well used to modify planning and to reinforce learning.

A strong feature is the careful annotation of individual records which are built up and are well used to inform parents in detailed reports. Additionally, parents have ready access to practitioners to discuss their children's progress and to bring forward any concerns.

There are good links with the primary school to which children transfer to ensure that judgements about standards and rates of progress are consistent and reliable.

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

There are effective arrangements to ensure children's health and wellbeing, which are used systematically. The setting is well-organised to ensure that all children are



encouraged to be active and curious learners. Children are invariably enthusiastic and enjoy their investigations. They are made very aware of the importance of being kind and of treating other children and animals with consideration. Children know when someone does something that is wrong or hurtful. They are beginning to recognise that their actions have consequences for themselves and for others. They understand that their setting is a community and that they have duties and responsibilities as part of it.

The nursery has good arrangement for supporting children with ALN. Currently there are no children on role who are identified as having ALN. In the past, practitioners have worked closely with a wide range of agencies to support these children when *necessary*.

The setting has an appropriate policy and has procedures for safeguarding good practice. There is a named practitioner with overall responsibility for dealing with child protection issues. All practitioners have undergone appropriate training. All necessary security checks have been undertaken. Risk assessments are rigorously completed and very detailed.

### **Learning environment: Good**

The setting provides an attractive and well-organised environment for all children. All are regarded as equally important and valued. There is a calm and supportive atmosphere where all children are successfully encouraged to play a full part in all the learning experiences provided.

There is a good allocation of well-trained and experienced practitioners who work conscientiously and cohesively as a team to meet the needs of all children. They are well aware of the needs of the Foundation Phase and have benefitted from ongoing training and professional development to extend and enhance their expertise. Resources are of a good quality and quantity. All children have easy access to appropriate toilet facilities and to well-organised and stimulating outdoor facilities which are safe and secure. The main indoor area is spacious and includes wet and dry play facilities as well as a kitchen.

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

The person in charge provides an energetic and committed lead to the other practitioners who form a hard working team. All are highly motivated and benefit from the clear sense of direction provided by the person in charge. There is a very positive ethos where all practitioners and children work together in a pronounced 'family' atmosphere. All practitioners co-operate willingly to provide a wide and interesting range of experiences which match the needs of all children in the setting.

The person in charge has successfully introduced systems to review individual practitioners' professional development priorities and to address them. Working closely with staff from the primary school and with the person responsible, much has

been achieved in addressing local and national priorities and developing organisations and practices to promote successful teaching and learning. The person responsible has a clear view of the longer term strategic needs of the setting. She ensures that planning is in place to address local and national initiatives and to continue to make improvements.

**Improving quality: Good**

Self-evaluation is undertaken regularly and includes the systematic gathering of the views of parents and carers. It is detailed and clearly identifies priorities for improvement. This is reflected in the successful way developments to the outdoor environment have been managed and addressed.

The constructive working relationship which exists, positively promotes both informal discussion of ways forward and more formal staff appraisal. All practitioners are eager to undertake further training and to extend their skills. This is having a positive impact on the quality of education provided.

**Partnership working: Good**

There is a strong partnership between all practitioners and parents and carers which is reflected in the very positive views parents often express. They are very appreciative of the links they have with the setting and feel very well informed and supported.

The setting has strong links with the primary school which enhance provision and ensures a smooth transfer. The setting regularly seeks the advice of the local authority (LA) which is invariably received positively and acted upon.

People in the local community are used effectively to enrich the curriculum and to support children's learning, for example through a wide range of visitors to the setting.

**Resource management: Good**

The setting has a good range of resources and plans to increase further its provision for children to extend their ICT skills. Resources are systematically arranged and organised to facilitate different learning experiences. Practitioners are well deployed to suit the needs of the activities planned. They work flexibly and exchange roles very successfully.

Financial planning and management is rigorous. Careful consideration is given to identifying the most appropriate resources to enhance learning. The setting gives good value for money.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Stakeholder satisfaction report**

#### **Responses to parent questionnaires**

Stakeholder satisfaction report:

Nine replies were received to the parent questionnaire. All were very supportive. All felt they were very happy with the setting and that their children settled in well and made good progress. They felt that the teaching was good and their children were well treated. All believed that the setting was well run and they were confident to approach the setting if they wished to discuss anything. Parents reported that they thought their children were safe and encouraged to be healthy. They were well informed.

#### **Responses to discussions with children**

Nearly all children were confident when talking to a visitor. They often spoke clearly and said that they liked coming to nursery and had many friends in it. They felt that their helpers were kind and they could go to them if they were unhappy or had a problem. They knew that they should always try to be kind and to behave well.

## Appendix 2

### The reporting inspector

Mr Peter Mathias	Reporting Inspector
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### Copies of the report

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