Charter Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Local Level Policy

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Author	Zoe Tite – Assistant Headteacher

Date	Notes

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At Charter Academy we:

- Intend for all children, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to make progress by remembering more and knowing more.
- Ensure all children have access to a fun and engaging, ambitious and creative curriculum that enables them to become procedurally fluent through their access to meaningful knowledge schemas that widen their life experiences and is remembered in the long term.
- Develop confident communicators and independent learners that demonstrate motivation, curiosity and a love of learning.
- Ensure all children learn about and demonstrate the British Values of; tolerance, mutual respect, individual liberty, democracy and rule of law while respecting differences including gender, ethnicity, religion and ability.
- Nurture, develop and challenge children to be aspirational and secure within themselves in order to prepare them for their future.

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers effective from 1 September 2026** and is informed by **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026**, Working Together to Safeguard Children and all relevant safeguarding and child protection legislation.

It reflects the four overarching principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

It also incorporates the latest expectations regarding safeguarding, assessment, curriculum intent, and early language development.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2026.

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Structure of the EYFS

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Charter Academy, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is viewed as a distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest children.

We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children's first educators and that they are active partners in their child's school education. The practitioners in our Early Years Foundation Stage will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide a supportive and inclusive experience where everyone is valued, and all achievements are celebrated.

Our core purpose at Charter Academy is to provide highly effective learning and teaching within a culture of challenge, nurture and support.

Using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum we provide learning experiences that enhance and encourage each unique child's intellectual, social, emotional, cultural, moral and physical development.

Our EYFS policy is directly related to our school vision, values and curriculum statement. It documents further aims and strategies we employ in order to address the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

· Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

· Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

· Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.

· We recognise the importance of all areas of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Each of the underlying principles is supported by the Key Person approach, and it is through these principles and commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework that we base our practice. Our Charter Academy ethos 'Growing Confident Learners' is embedded in all classes across the Early Years Foundation Stage.



Effective Practice in relation to each of the four overarching principles of EYFS, the seven key features of effective practice and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning is detailed in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The EYFS children at Charter Academy are grouped into 4 classes – Holly, Hazel, Hawthorn, Pine and Cherry.

Holly is our 2 year-old provision and Hazel is our 3 year-old provision. The two classes share their indoor and outdoor classrooms. There are four Early Years Practitioners (including the Nursery Manager) that work with the classes. The Nursery Manager works closely with the teacher in Hawthorn when planning for learning and development and especially when considering our 30 hour children that attend both Hazel and Hawthorn.

Hawthorn is our 3-4 year old provision. The class of 26 children has one teacher and one Nursery Nurse.

Cherry and Pine are our Reception classes with a capacity of 45 children. As a one and a half entry classroom there are two teachers and a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to enable the children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The enabling environment is set up in learning areas where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. Each classroom has an outdoor classroom where opportunities for learning are offered in a different way and on a different scale than when in the indoor classroom. The children are able to explore, use their senses and be physically active. Our objective led planning across the EYFS includes learning in the outdoor classroom and encompass learning and development across all the 7 areas of learning.

4. Curriculum

Our curriculum is ambitious, well-sequenced and designed to ensure that all children, regardless of starting point, make strong progress. It focuses on building secure foundations in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development, recognising these as crucial to future learning.

We place a strong emphasis on:

- Early language and vocabulary development, particularly for disadvantaged pupils
- Play-based and adult-guided learning, ensuring a balance of child-initiated and structured teaching
- High-quality interactions that extend thinking and deepen learning
- Supporting self-regulation and executive function

Practitioners adapt teaching in response to children's needs, ensuring inclusivity, particularly for those with SEND and EAL.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

At Charter Academy, our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensures that we address the seven key features of effective practice:

· Providing the best for every child.
· Offering consistent, high-quality care for all our children.
· Planning a curriculum with a focus on what we want children to learn.
· Using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective in helping children to learn. · Implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
· Supporting children to develop their self-regulation and executive function.
· Developing a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communications.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and language**
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical development**
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- **Personal, social and emotional development**
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- **Literacy**
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics**
  - Numbers
  - Numerical patterns
- **Understanding the world**
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- **Expressive arts and design**
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

At Charter Academy, we recognise that teaching can take place at all times of the day through discrete teaching sessions, through times of play and during independent child-led learning both inside and in the outdoor learning environment.
We strive to make our environments irresistible to children and encourage our practitioners to seize every opportunity to scaffold the children's learning through highly effective interactions and teaching. Long, medium- and short-term planning formalises our curriculum and aims to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning. Practitioners are encouraged to carefully consider their questions and interventions in children's learning in order to optimise their opportunities to remember more and know more.

Children's learning is personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Through enabling environments and skilful practitioners, the children are motivated to be life-long learners.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will:
• Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
• Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
• Encourage independence
• Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
• Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children
• Help children to see links in their learning
• Support and encourage the children
• Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
• Re-direct the play if necessary
• Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
• Promote children's well-being
• Observe and assess learning
• Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
• Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
• Ensure the environment is safe and secure and that the Welfare Requirements are in place

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners consider the different ways that children learn and reflect this in their practice.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

• **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
• **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
• **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

It is our aim that children leave the EYFS with:

- a positive 'can do' attitude to learning.
- a willingness to take risks and make mistakes.
- high levels of engagement in a task where they can practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills.
- perseverance
- a love of learning
- ideas of their own, that they can plan and follow through.
- an ability to communicate their fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Early Language and Early Reading

In line with the updated framework emphasis:

- Early language is a priority across all areas of provision
- Staff model high-quality language and extend children's vocabulary
- Systematic synthetic phonics (RWI) is delivered with fidelity
- Reading for pleasure is embedded daily

Early reading is prioritised across our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The importance of modelled talk and the thinking out loud process to support language development and early reading is crucial throughout the EYFS.
WellComm, a speech and language toolkit and intervention programme is used throughout the EYFS classrooms to target children's individual needs. Baseline assessments give clear areas for development and areas of strength for each child. Interventions are targeted to the needs of each individual child and are delivered one-to-one or in small groups.
The teaching of phonics is delivered with fidelity through the systematic, synthetic phonics programme Read Write Inc (RWI). In the EYFS the children begin to learn the stories for each phoneme/grapheme in the spring term of their Nursery year and then learn the phoneme/grapheme correspondence during the summer term.
In Reception the children have daily phonics sessions in ability groups that are matched to their current needs. Children are assessed every six weeks as part of the programme and are grouped according to their phonic ability. The children take home sound blending books or RWI reading books that are matched to the phonics group they access. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the strategy used for decoding.
Timely intervention is planned for those children working below the expected age-related expectation through daily 'pinny time' and Fast Track Phonics session. Flashcards are used throughout the day to reinforce and rehearse phonics learning.
Charter Academy also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children can comprehend what they read and listen to. This sits alongside the development of children's oracy skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment.
Practitioners also strive to promote a love of reading though daily reading for pleasure sessions. The school reading spine was based on research into children's literature and specific texts are planned for all children from the 2-year-olds to Year 6. Carefully selected books are shared with children throughout the EYFS.
In line with the EYFS 2026 framework, practitioners carefully consider the use of digital technology and screen-based experiences. Technology is used purposefully to enhance learning and is never a substitute for high-quality adult interaction, communication, physical activity, play or exploration. Staff have regard to current government guidance regarding children's screen use.

Mathematics

Mathematics is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine; discrete teaching sessions with follow up group activities and play-based opportunities and experiences throughout the enabling learning environment. We recognise that mathematics can take place in any environment, and we promote the use of learning mathematical skills through play-based opportunities. Children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures and interventions are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding, allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year. We adopt the Mastering Number approach to our teaching, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year.

Play

At Charter Academy we believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's independent child-led learning through play. We believe that play, in both the indoor and outdoor learning environment, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be lively and interactive, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children are developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, the desired outcomes for the end of the EYFS.

4.1 Planning

Our practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas.

Staff also consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable learning experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Teaching is responsive and informed by continuous assessment. Practitioners:

- Provide clear modelling and scaffolding to support learning
- Use questioning and sustained shared thinking to extend understanding
- Adapt provision to support all learners, including those with SEND and EAL
- Ensure children have frequent opportunities to practise and embed learning

There is a clear progression towards more adult-directed learning in Reception to prepare children for Key Stage 1.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Areas of learning and development are planned through a series of themes in our long and medium-term planning. These plans provide learning experiences in all seven areas of learning and are mapped with progress in learning and development central to our intention.

These plans then inform short-term weekly planning, alongside observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. Children can access each of the learning areas within the indoor and outdoor classrooms. Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. During children's play, our early years practitioners interact, scaffold and question to support and challenge the children's learning and development. In planning and guiding children's activities, we consider the different ways that children learn and reflect on this in our practice.

5. Inclusion and equality

We ensure all children, including those with SEND, EAL and from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully included. Practitioners:

- Adapt teaching and provision to meet individual needs
- Work closely with external professionals where appropriate
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of learning

6. Assessment

Assessment in the EYFS is ongoing, formative and integral to teaching. Practitioners use observations, interactions and knowledge of the child to inform planning and next steps.

Statutory requirements include:

- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) completed within the first 6 weeks
- EYFS Profile at the end of Reception, assessing children against the 17 Early Learning Goals

Assessment does not rely on excessive evidence collection but instead prioritises professional judgement.

At Charter Academy, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and carers. The 2-year-old development check results are shared with parents through conversations and in the form of a written report.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). We also use a range of assessments, both formative and summative, with individual pupils at various points including phonics screening and the speech and language toolkit, WellComm.
At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:
● meeting expected levels of development
● not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions among teachers working with the children as well as additional discussion with parents/carers. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Trust devised guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) in the summer term when requested.
The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers for their child. We formally report to our Nursery and Reception parents three times a year through parents’ evening and with a written report. The written report shared in July is a detailed summary and contains information about how each child learns and an assessment of each of the seven areas of learning.

7. Working with parents

We recognise that partnership with parents is essential. We ensure:

- Regular communication about children's learning and development
- Opportunities for parents to contribute to assessment
- Support for parents to aid learning at home, especially early reading and language

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Parents are supported in understanding the importance of healthy lifestyles, oral health, sleep routines, communication-rich interactions and appropriate screen use. Information and guidance are shared regularly to promote children's wellbeing and development both at home and in school.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents/carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Where additional support is needed, Charter Academy works in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies to access Early Help and Family Help services, ensuring that children and families receive timely and effective support.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Safeguarding is central to all practice. In line with updated expectations:

- All staff maintain up-to-date paediatric first aid training
- Rigorous procedures ensure children are safe, secure and well supervised
- There is a strong focus on oral health, healthy lifestyles and wellbeing
- Staff are vigilant and responsive to safeguarding concerns

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Charter Academy follows all safeguarding expectations outlined within KCSIE 2026. All staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and are required to read Part One of KCSIE 2026. Safeguarding training is updated regularly and forms part of the induction process for all new staff.

Staff are aware of safeguarding risks including child-on-child abuse, exploitation, serious violence, domestic abuse, modern slavery, online abuse, prejudice-based harm, attendance concerns, and vulnerabilities linked to mental health. Concerns are recorded promptly and reported in accordance with Charter Academy's safeguarding procedures.

Charter Academy recognises the importance of identifying concerns at the earliest possible stage. Staff work collaboratively with families and external agencies to secure appropriate support through

Early Help and Family Help services where needs are identified. Early intervention is viewed as a key component of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children

For children aged 3 and over:

- Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
- Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children

For Reception aged children:

- We comply with infant class size legislation
- We have the capacity for 45 children with two teachers with Qualified Teacher Status and a Higher Level Teaching Assistant

All of our early years practitioners hold a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate and are available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Charter Academy ensures robust safer recruitment procedures are followed. Appropriate suitability and criminal record checks are completed before staff and relevant volunteers begin work with children, in line with EYFS 2026 and KCSIE 2026 requirements.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we promote good oral health, as well as good health in general by talking to the children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- The importance of a healthy diet and fruit and vegetables

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Online Safety

Online safety is recognised as an essential component of safeguarding. Children are taught age-appropriate behaviours to help keep themselves safe both online and offline. The academy maintains effective filtering and monitoring systems and reviews their effectiveness at least annually. Staff understand the safeguarding risks associated with online activity, including exposure to inappropriate content, misinformation, disinformation, online grooming, cyberbullying and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), deepfake images and image-based abuse.

At Charter Academy, technology is used thoughtfully to enrich children's learning. Digital resources are carefully selected to support teaching and learning and are used alongside, rather than instead of, meaningful interactions, play-based learning, physical activity and outdoor experiences. Staff consider

the age, stage and individual needs of children when planning the use of technology and promote healthy, balanced approaches to screen use through ongoing partnership with families.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Staff understand that mental health concerns can in some cases be an indicator that a child has experienced or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Practitioners are alert to signs that children or families may require additional support and work with safeguarding leads and external agencies where appropriate to ensure children receive early help and intervention.

Safer Sleep

For younger children, practitioners follow current safer sleep guidance and ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in promoting safe sleep practices. Sleep arrangements are regularly monitored and discussed with parents where appropriate.

9.Transition

Transition from pre-school to Reception

Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition to school.

This is facilitated by:

Parents attend 'Welcome to Charter Academy' induction meetings for our Reception age children where they are able to meet the teacher and share information about their child. There is also the opportunity to accompany their child to a taster session in their new class,

Home visits being carried out by staff for all children new to Charter Academy.

Stay and play sessions that are held in school in the summer term for all children prior to starting in September.

Liaison with outside agencies including any settings that the children have attended prior to starting school.

Transition from Reception to Year 1

We aim to continue the children's learning journey with continuity, stability and security. This helps to ensure the children are ready for the curriculum changes of Year 1 and they will continue to be excited and motivated to learn.

This is facilitated by:

Class teachers and HLTA liaising closely and sharing EYFS assessment records with the Year 1 staff through transition meetings.

The Year 1 class teachers visit the EYFS classrooms throughout the summer term to share a story and build positive relationships.

The classes will have a transition day with their new teacher in their new classroom in the summer term.

10.Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Zoe Tite (Assistant Headteacher) yearly.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Illness/infection policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Evacuation Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child	See Late/Non collection of child policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Trust Complaints Policy
Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring	E Safety Policy/Trust Acceptable Use Policy