POLICY	**EYFS Policy 2026/2027**
STATUS/DATE OF THIS VERSION	**September 2026**
APPROVED BY	**Board of Trustees**
RATIFIED BY	**Board of Trustees**
REVIEW	**September 2027**

This policy is operated by all the schools in Unity Education Trust (as listed below).
There may be sections that are specific to one school and these will be added by the school either as an annex or in place of yellow highlighted sections below.

Any queries about the policy should be directed, in the first instance, to the Headteacher/Head of School:

- **Beeston Primary School**
- **Garvestone Primary School**
- **Grove House Infant and Nursery School**
- **King's Park Infant School**
- **Churchill Park Academy**
- **Greyfriars Academy**
- **Highgate Infant School**
- **King's Oak Infant School**
- **Wimbotsham and Stow Academy**
- **Magdalen Academy**
- **St German's Academy**
- **Great Dunham Primary School**

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Children access a broad and balanced curriculum that equips them with the knowledge and skills for lifelong learning.
- Teaching and learning are of high quality and consistent, enabling every child to make progress.
- Staff work in close partnership with parents and carers.
- Every child is supported and included through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

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2. Legislation

This policy is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2025.
It should be read alongside non-statutory guidance, including:

• Development Matters (DfE, revised September 2023)

• Birth to Five Matters (under review as part of the school's ongoing assessment development work)

It also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

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3. Structure of the EYFS

At Churchill Park Academy, pupils in EYFS are placed in classes in either the Experience Pathway or the Engage Pathway, according to their learning needs, based on information gathered at induction. Our classes are mixed-age, and pupils may be grouped with others in EYFS, Year 1, and Year 2. Due to the complex learning needs of many pupils, learning is planned and assessed according to developmental need rather than chronological age alone. Reception-aged pupils may learn alongside older pupils within developmental pathway classes where this best meets their needs and enables progression from individual starting points.
Further information about our learning pathways can be found on our website: Churchill Park Curriculum.

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4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the EYFS statutory framework, but due to the complex SEND of our pupils, this is adapted significantly.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

4.1 Planning

- Planning is informed by assessment, EHCP outcomes, children's interests, communication needs and developmental readiness.
- Staff plan activities and experiences that enable effective learning and development, with a strong focus on the prime areas, particularly Communication & Language.
- Learning environments are simplified to reduce sensory overload, offering sensory and hands-on activities for manageable periods.
- Plans take account of each child's needs, interests, and developmental stage.
- Activities are designed to build engagement and skills, particularly in Communication & Interaction and Personal, Social & Emotional Development.
- Specialist support is accessed where needed (e.g., Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy).

4.2 Teaching

- Teaching combines adult-led and child-initiated activities through purposeful play.
- Staff respond to each child's emerging needs with warm, positive interaction.
- Where development allows, adult-led activities focus on preparing pupils for subject-specific learning.

4.3 Communication and Interaction

Communication is central to learning and development within the Early Years. Staff support pupils to communicate using a range of approaches appropriate to individual need, including spoken language, symbols, signing, objects of reference and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Adults act as skilled communication partners and model communication consistently throughout the day to promote understanding, expression, choice-making and independence.

4.4 High Quality Adult Interaction

High quality adult interaction is fundamental to effective learning. Staff use purposeful interactions to promote sustained engagement, communication, independence and resilience.

Adults:

- use appropriate wait time
- respond to children's interests and communication attempts
- facilitate sustained shared thinking where appropriate
- know when to intervene and when to step back
- provide opportunities for children to initiate communication and learning
- use Intensive Interaction approaches where appropriate
- support children to develop increasing independence and confidence.

Staff recognise that meaningful learning may be demonstrated through engagement, exploration, anticipation, communication, problem-solving and independence.

4.5 Independence, Resilience and Choice Making

Opportunities for independence, resilience and self-advocacy are planned across the curriculum and daily routines.

Children are encouraged to:

- make choices;
- communicate preferences;
- develop self-help skills;
- take appropriate risks;
- persist with challenges;
- develop increasing independence within learning and care routines.

Staff recognise that resilience develops through carefully supported challenge and positive experiences of success.

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5. Assessment

Assessment is embedded within daily teaching and learning through observation, interaction and responsive practice. Staff identify and celebrate small-step progress and use this information to inform planning, Personal Learning Goals, EHCP outcomes and next steps in learning.

The school continually reviews assessment approaches to ensure developmental progress can be accurately identified and celebrated for all learners.

Progress is viewed as the accumulation of small developmental steps over time and is measured against individual starting points rather than age-related expectations alone.

Small-step achievements are recognised and celebrated and used to shape future learning opportunities.

- Assessment is continuous and based on observation of achievement, interests, and learning styles.
- Observations are recorded in the online learning journal and used to inform Personal Learning Goals (PLGs), linked to EHCP targets.
- Parent/carer contributions are valued and included.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA):

- Within the first 6 weeks of reception, pupils normally complete the RBA.
- From 2026/27, this is administered via DfE Sign-in assessment services, requiring two devices (one for the practitioner, one touchscreen device for the pupil).
- Where a pupil cannot access the RBA even with adaptations, the headteacher records 'unable to access' in line with ARA 2025 guidance.

End of EYFS Assessment:

- In the final term of reception, teachers complete the EYFS Profile (EYFSP) in line with the EYFSP Handbook 2025.
- Judgements are based on observations and discussions with parents/carers.
- Internal moderation is undertaken, with data submitted to the LA as required.
- For pupils working below the level of the national curriculum and not engaged in subject-specific study, the Engagement Model is used to assess progress. This does not replace EYFSP unless an exemption applies.

Staff use assessment in the moment to identify, respond to and build upon children's interests, achievements and next steps.

Assessment may include evidence of engagement, communication, independence and developmental progression from individual starting points.

The school is currently exploring developmental assessment approaches, including Birth to 5 Matters, to support future assessment and progression within Reception and developmental learning pathways.

5.1 Developmental Progression

Due to the complex needs of many pupils, developmental progression may not align with chronological age expectations.

Staff consider developmental readiness, individual starting points and EHCP outcomes when planning next steps. Small-step progress is valued and recognised as an important indicator of learning.

6. Working with Parents and Carers

- Strong partnerships between staff and parents/carers are central to effective learning.
- Each child is supported through tailored provision, and families are assisted in accessing specialist services where needed.
- Parents/carers are kept regularly informed of progress and development.

6.1 Transition

Effective transition arrangements support children when starting school and when moving beyond Reception. Information is gathered from families, previous settings and professionals to support a successful transition into school.

Churchill Park Academy operates a structured transition programme for pupils joining the school, particularly those entering Reception and Key Stage 1. Where appropriate, pupils participate in an extended six-week transition programme which is personalised to their individual needs. This may include visits to the school, participation in learning activities, opportunities to experience classroom routines and expectations, familiarisation with key staff, and time spent in the rooms, outdoor areas and specialist spaces that will form part of their daily environment.

The transition programme aims to reduce anxiety, build familiarity and confidence, establish positive relationships and ensure pupils are well prepared for starting school. Families are supported throughout the process and are encouraged to share information about their child's strengths, interests, communication methods and support needs.

Transition from Reception into Key Stage 1 is carefully planned through visits, information sharing and collaborative working between staff, families and professionals. Particular attention is given to maintaining consistency in communication approaches, therapeutic programmes, sensory support strategies, EHCP outcomes and successful learning approaches to ensure continuity of provision.

Staff recognise that successful transitions are fundamental to children's emotional well-being, engagement, independence and future learning success.

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7. Safeguarding and Welfare

Children learn best when healthy, safe, and secure, with individual needs met and strong adult relationships in place.

- We comply with EYFS Section 3 requirements on safeguarding and welfare.

- We also meet Infant Class Size legislation (maximum 30 pupils per teacher in KS1 classes, with limited statutory exceptions).
- As a complex-needs school, adult-to-pupil ratios are usually higher than statutory minimums, based on assessed needs.
- At least one member of staff with a paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is always present, including on trips. Certificates are renewed every 3 years.

Health & Oral Health:

- We promote healthy eating and oral health.
- From April 2025, we follow national supervised toothbrushing guidance and align with the national supervised toothbrushing programme for early years and primary settings.
- Where SEND prevents engagement in toothbrushing, OT support is sought for oral-motor programmes, and families are signposted to specialist services.

All other safeguarding and welfare procedures are set out in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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8. Monitoring Quality of Provision

Quality of provision is monitored through:

- learning walks;
- classroom observations;
- coaching activities and reflective practice;
- assessment reviews;
- moderation activities;
- pupil progress discussions;
- scrutiny of planning and learning evidence.

Monitoring focuses on the quality of adult interactions, communication support, assessment practices and pupil engagement.

Professional development, coaching and reflective practice are used to continually improve the quality of teaching, assessment and adult interaction.

This policy is reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead and Headteacher. Amendments are ratified by the Trust Board, or earlier if significant national policy changes occur.

Appendix 1. Statutory EYFS Policies & Procedures

Policy / Procedure	**See our school website for:**
Safeguarding	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Responding to illness	Health & safety policy; First Aid policy
Administering medicines	Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation	Health & safety policy
Identity of visitors	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Missing children / non-collection	Child protection and safeguarding policy
Concerns & complaints	Complaints policy