



Nevill Road Infant School

Handwriting

Reviewed: September 2022
Reviewer: Jonathan Whitfield (Headteacher)
Next renewal date: September 2025

What is handwriting?

Handwriting may be some or all of these things. For some it is purely an art form, and the neatness and accuracy of the presentation is the main focus. For others, it needs to be a functional tool which allows them to put ideas on to paper, effortlessly and fast. Here, the look of the script is less important than the fluency of the script. For all of us, there are times when we need handwriting for one purpose and times for others.

Eventually, our handwriting becomes very personal, a part of our self-image and an expression of our personality, just as the way we dress and present ourselves is. We all have a view on how our handwriting appears to others and would sometimes like that image to be different!

Handwriting is a means of expressing language, just like speech, and it also leaves a lasting trace. Some call it 'Language by Hand'. It is a physical way of expressing thoughts and ideas and a means of communicating with others.

Mark-making is basic to humans. Symbolic representation for others to interpret is uniquely human and it is known that humankind has engaged in writing since cave paintings were first discovered. However, the production of the symbols of any writing system is not something which comes naturally, like walking or jumping. We cannot write unless we have been taught how to, a fact which is sometimes ignored. The formations of the symbols within each writing system have ideal movement patterns, and the spatial relationships between symbols and the directional conventions on the page have to be communicated between generations.

Handwriting is a very complex skill to master, one which involves linguistic, cognitive, perceptual and motor components, all of which have to be coordinated into an integrated fashion. Although we take it for granted, some people, young and old, find handwriting very difficult to perform and feel they need help to perfect the skill. Support from those with expertise and experience is nearly always appreciated.

Why is handwriting important?

Jotting down a shopping list, writing a birthday card, taking down a phone message, completing a form at the bankhandwriting is part of our daily lives. It is on show to others and may be used to make judgments about us.

Writing has a very long history. It began as simple pictographs drawn on a rock, which were then combined to represent ideas and developed into more abstract symbols. Just like our writing today, early symbols were used to store information and communicate it to others.

In recent years, modern technology has dramatically changed the way we communicate through writing. However, despite the increased use of computers for writing, the skill of handwriting remains important in education, employment and in everyday life.

Time devoted to the teaching and learning of letter formation in the early years will pay off. Legible writing that can be produced comfortably, at speed and with little conscious effort allows a child to attend to the higher-level aspects of writing composition and content. This is important when assessments are based on written work, particularly in time-limited written examinations, which remain as a major form of assessment for many formal qualifications. Without fast and legible handwriting, pupils may miss out on learning opportunities and under-achieve academically.

Beyond formal education, most employment situations will involve at least some handwriting and any require the communication of critical information (e.g. medical notes, prescriptions).

Thus, handwriting with pen and paper still has an important role from early childhood through our adult lives, but more and more, people are shifting from paper to electronic modes of communication. Interestingly though, many personal computers now have handwriting recognition capability so that handwriting as means of interacting with computers is becoming more pervasive. It seems, therefore, that even in this modern age, handwriting remains an important skill for communication.

Teaching Overview

Whilst the following sequence is a developmental approach to handwriting, it is acknowledged that children will progress at different rates and perform at different levels and therefore will need a suitably differentiated approach.

Suggested Yr Group	Main Content	Teaching Aims
N / YR	Pencil control Hand-eye coordination Movements necessary to form letters	To make controlled pencil movements To join two points with a straight or curved line To follow a given sequence of movements
YR	Pencil control Letter-like movements Recognition of lower-case letters linked to upper case letters Upper case letters (alphabetical order) Numbers 0-9	To produce a comfortable pencil grip To produce a controlled line that supports letter formation To write upper case letters using the correct sequence of movements To recognise lower case letters
YR / Y1	Pre-cursive lower case letters grouped according to movement Recognition of lower-case joins Upper and lower-case links	To develop a comfortable and efficient pencil grip for forming and linking letters To recognise upper and lower-case counterparts To form lower case letters correctly in a script that will be easy to join
Y1	Lower case letter formation and joins in a cursive style using common rime patterns Main punctuation marks	To reinforce the link between handwriting, spelling and the recognition of phonic patterns and letter strings To practise correct letter orientation, formation and proportion
Y2	High-frequency word practice Print in the environment Letter joins through common spelling patterns and strings Print for labels, notices etc. School and classroom vocabulary Beginnings of self-assessment	Practice in basic sight vocabulary Reinforcement and practice using the four basic handwriting diagonal and horizontal joins Linking handwriting to phonic and spelling knowledge and patterns Conceptual awareness of space required for printing (for labels, notices etc.)
Y3	Reinforcement and practice of print and cursive style Copy writing Uses to which handwriting may be put High-frequency word practice Development of spelling patterns	Reinforcement and practice of cursive and printed style to ensure consistency in size and proportion of letters and the spacing between letters and words Purposes and uses of handwriting and print

At the earliest stages of handwriting / mark-making development it is important not to over correct and stifle motor-cognition; however, it may be more beneficial in the long run to begin a lead in and out as soon as children are entering a phase of letter formation.

The joined cursive style will be known as a ‘swish and flick’ throughout the school.

Teaching Sequence

i l t → u y j f → r n m → h k →
n d b p q g → c a o s e

V W L U Z → X Y D → F E H K →
P R B → N M → A I T J → Q C G S O

Handwriting non-negotiables

1. All children and adults must write in a cursive script or one that is developing towards this i.e. all pupil outcomes, marking, IWB work
2. All children must be provided with at least one weekly handwriting session that is guided, modelled and specifically taught by the teacher or teaching assistant (this can be cross-curricular and not always a separate lesson) daily opportunities for children to engage in rehearsing letter formation, joins and a cursive script must be provided
3. During the early stages of handwriting development, children may have access to a handwriting book to facilitate further practice
4. Learning environments must have a range of cursive handwritten and typed fonts with cursive letters clearly displayed
5. All adults must insist children use a cursive script or one that is developing towards this
6. A good standard of handwriting must be celebrated through specific praise, effective feedback and the use of weekly handwriting certificates

Paper formats are available at the following website to support additional work at home or school

<http://donnayoung.org/penmanship/handwriting-paper-bw.htm>

Appendices for activities

1. Letter formation

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee

Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk

Ll Mm Nn Oo

Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt

Uu Vv Ww Xx

Yy Zz

i t t V W L U Z

u y j f X Y D

r n m F E H K

h k P R B

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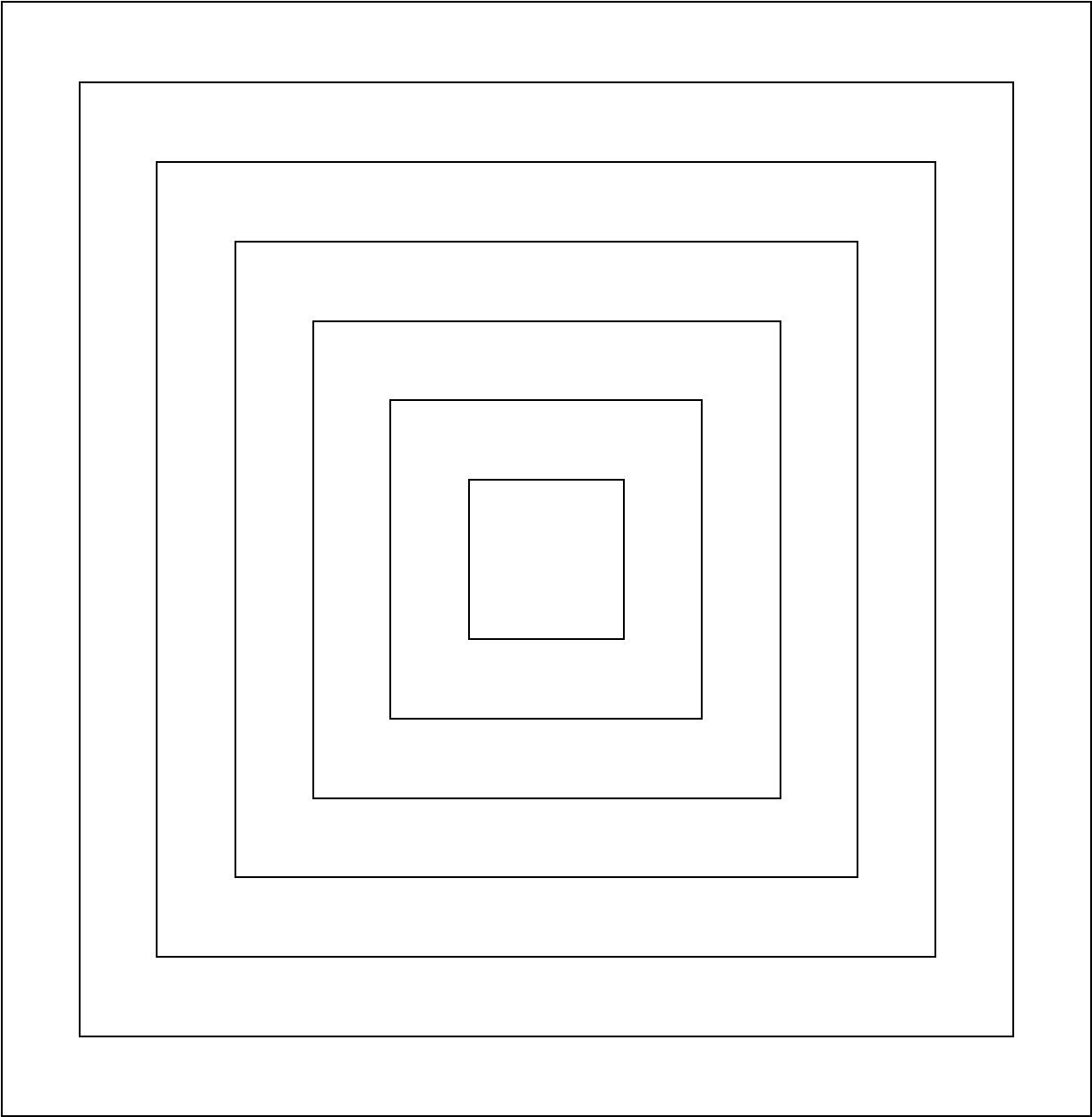
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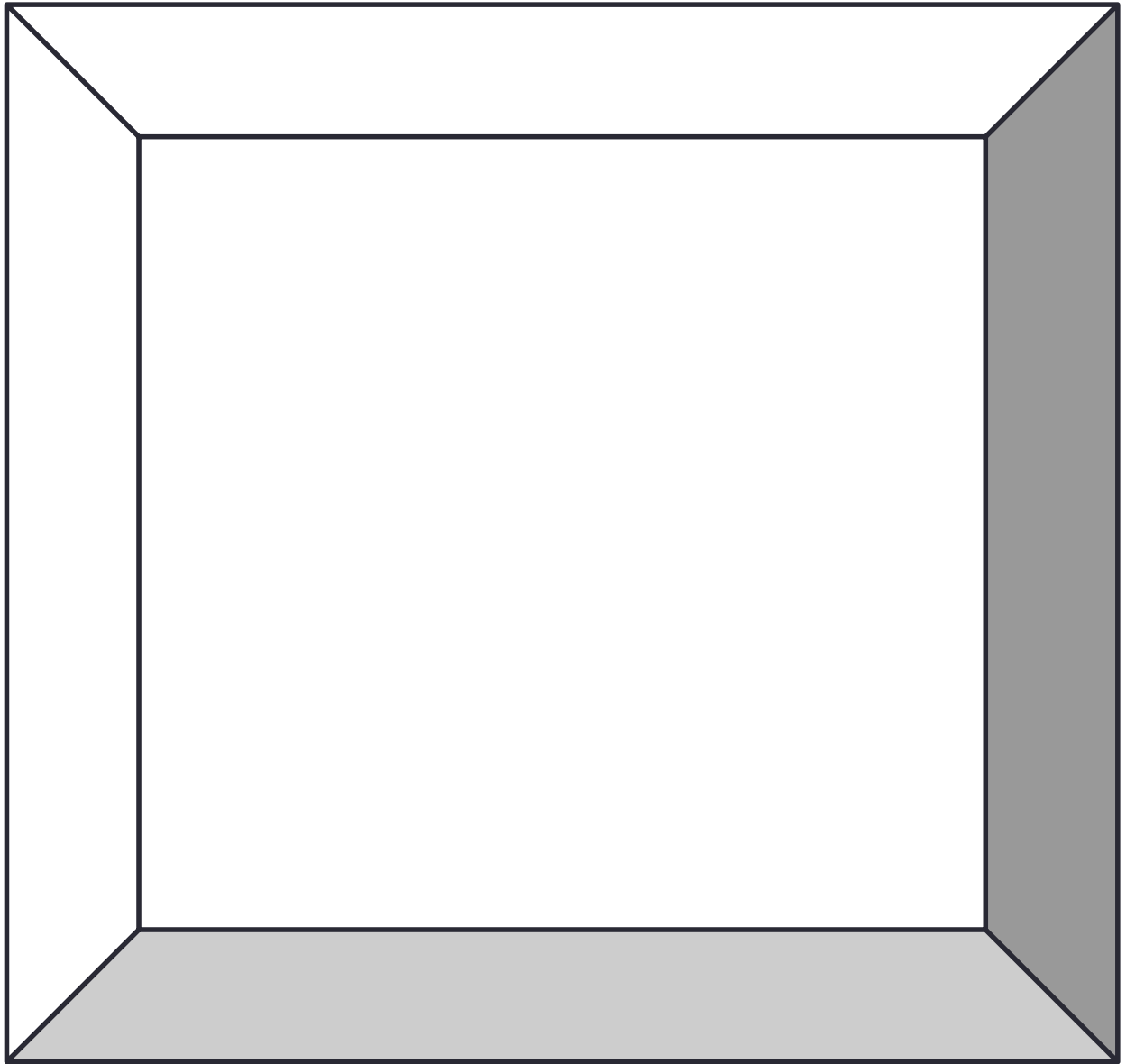
Stockport Manchester

2. Border for repetitive pattern / letter formation practice





3. Full name template


4. Initial Template



5. Postcard Template

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6. Shopping List Template