Reading is a top priority at our school. As Roald Dahl said: ‘I have a passion for teaching kids to become readers, to become comfortable with a book, not daunted. Books shouldn’t be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage.’ We are passionate about our responsibility to not only develop our pupils as fluent, confident and proficient readers but to open their minds to the magic and joy of reading. It is our mission to ensure that every child leaves Buckden Primary Academy as a reader and that no child ‘slips through the reading net’.

In EYFS and Year 1, we teach phonics through the StoryTime Phonics programme which teaches children the skills they need to learn to read and write within the context of real books and which is designed to give children a love of books and reading. We believe all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and to read for enjoyment.

The programme engages children through interactive storytelling of books and provides actions for each phoneme to teach and reinforce the 44 phonemes they need to learn. The programme also teaches the common words children will come across when reading and also encourages children to become aware of rhyme, alliteration and the rhythm of language.

StoryTime Phonics is an inclusive, synthetic, whole class phonics, reading and writing programme which is based on Letters and Sounds. Talking bookmarks are used to encourage children to talk about the stories and develop a rich understanding of text.

The programme teaches four sounds a week, with Mondays used as a consolidation and revision session of previous learning. Phonics lessons are taught every day for 20 minutes. Further sessions are planned where necessary to give children extra practise and consolidation.

Reading at home is widely promoted and encouraged throughout our school. Stories are read daily to children by staff with enthusiasm, confidence and enjoyment. Children are provided with a decodable book to read at home, which is linked to each stage of the children’s phonics knowledge. Children also choose an additional book that is appropriate for their age to share with their family at home to promote their love for reading. These books are changed twice a week with the expectation that children will read at home with an adult a minimum of three times per week.