

James Buckley

St Joseph's Tobruk Memorial School, Beenleigh Classroom Teacher

James is deeply committed to evidence-based practice. He regularly researches contemporary approaches and brings well-considered ideas to his teaching teams, modelling a willingness to trial, refine, and embed strategies that enhance learning. His openness to learning and reflective mindset inspires others to innovate with confidence and purpose. A distinctive feature of James' practice is the way he creatively captures attention and curiosity. Through the intentional use of costumes—such as hats, t-shirts, and outfits—he creates strong and memorable connections to learning. These moments often spark laughter first, then lead to deeper conversations about concepts for students and pedagogy for staff. Whether in classrooms, staffrooms, or assemblies, these creative entry points promote professional dialogue and shared reflection on effective teaching practice. Students eagerly anticipate the weekly creativity, actively discussing the meaning, connections, and concepts highlighted through these experiences. James' creativity and actions have had a sustained and positive influence on the culture of the school. He strengthens connections between students and learning, while fostering professional conversations that keep teaching and learning at the centre. Often without words, James clearly communicates that students and their learning are at the heart of his profession. Most importantly, his innovative and inclusive approach has enriched learning experiences, enhanced engagement, and contributed meaningfully to improved student outcomes.

James has made a significant and sustained contribution to improving student outcomes, particularly in reading, which has been a whole-school EIA focus over the past two years. Through the consistent implementation of Reading Progress and structured daily reviews, James has strengthened the quality of feedback students receive and sharpened instructional decision-making in his classroom. This has resulted in increased student engagement and measurable improvements in reading fluency, especially in the upper primary years. Students can clearly articulate how feedback supports their growth as readers and demonstrate increased confidence, stamina, and motivation to improve. James' planning reflects a clear alignment between data, instruction, and review, ensuring learning is targeted and purposeful. James responds to student needs with precision, care, and a deep commitment to differentiation. He uses Reading Progress to meet students where they are at, gradually increasing the complexity of texts while closely monitoring progress and adjusting instruction accordingly. He ensures all students experience success and challenge through tailored tasks, explicit feedback, and regular review cycles. James also embraces digital tools and modern resources to enhance learning and wellbeing, recognising that engagement and personal connection are key drivers of success. His practice reflects a strong belief that all students deserve equitable access to high-quality learning and achievable pathways for growth. A lifelong learner, James grounds his pedagogy in current evidence and research and generously shares his learning with colleagues. Over the past 12 months, he has embedded Reading Progress into his daily practice and quietly but effectively modelled its impact through structured peer observation processes, collegial dialogue, and open-classroom visits. His willingness to open his classroom has been critical to strengthening the school's culture of peer observation. As a result, the majority of teachers across Years 2–6 have sought opportunities to visit his classroom to learn from his practice, contributing to collective teacher efficacy and improved outcomes for students beyond his own class. James' teaching is grounded in

justice, inclusivity, and hope. He intentionally designs learning experiences that ensure all students share common entry points, fostering belonging, confidence, and connection. Through creative and interactive strategies—such as been in character for a day, hands-on inquiries, or innovative learning hooks like bike challenges in the classroom for the day—James enables students to engage deeply with concepts while respecting diverse learning needs. His classroom is a place of joy, laughter, and trust, where students feel valued and supported. These practices reflect the Gospel values at the heart of Catholic education and promote wellbeing through meaningful engagement and relational connection. James leads with integrity and humility, consistently striving for excellence and meaningful impact. His innovation and creativity—whether integrating cross-curricular challenges, designing visual supports, or creating immersive learning experiences—bring learning to life and inspire both students and colleagues. His sense of fun strengthens relationships, while his intentional planning ensures learning remains rigorous and inclusive. James’ practice embodies hope, as he holds high expectations for every learner and continually seeks ways to improve outcomes for all. His commitment to excellence, justice, and collaboration makes him a highly respected educator and a valued contributor to the school community.

James turns responsive teaching into student momentum, helping learners engage, persist and achieve at St Joseph’s Tobruk Memorial School, Beenleigh.
