

Qurio

Cultivated Curiosity

“Fairytale and curiosity inspired the design; ideas such as ‘breadcrumbs’ as colourful geometries on the floor, ‘keyholes’ windows for peeking through walls, and curvy white acoustic ceiling panels that float above like clouds.” — [Kenny Kinugasa-Tsui, co-founder of Bean Buro](#)

“We created an adaptable environment for different spatial setups. The idea is similar to a theatre stage. Young learners can choose how they would like to engage with the class.” — [Lorène Faure, co-founder of Bean Buro](#)

The Brief: A curious learning centre

We were tasked to create an inventive learning centre for Qurio—a high-quality enrichment school for children aged four to twelve that offers an after-school programme with an innovative curriculum.

The learning centre’s ethos is to use curiosity to accelerate learning. It is about nurturing the child’s ability and interest in an interactive and non-prescriptive environment through experiential learning to nurture life skills.

Hence, space serves as an essential setting for peer-to-peer interaction between the students, teachers and parents as a community place. IT/AV technology was incorporated subtly and humanistically.

The design catered for around 40 staff over 34 classrooms of around 8-10 students in each. It also includes a back office for ten management and operational staff.

The Narrative: Communal spaces inspired by fairytales

Fairytales inspired the design with ideas such as ‘breadcrumbs’ where one would intuitively engage the colourful geometries on the floor, and ‘keyholes’ windows, where one could peek through the walls to discover new spaces.

Circulation areas were all designed as flexible co-working environments with loose furniture. A long dining table in front of the pantry can be separated into two tables with readily available nets and racquets as ping pong tables.

Blue-coloured book libraries with in-wall seats further encourage reading and discovery.

The Solution: A flexible setting for interactive learning

In response to the teaching ethos of allowing the young learners to choose how they would like to learn, the design allows great flexibility as an adaptable environment where all the classrooms have loose furniture for different spatial setups. The idea is similar to a theatre stage; some classrooms

have operable partitions to create bigger or smaller spaces instantly. The largest event hall space caters up to approximately one hundred people.

The Materials: Colour psychology for children

Having researched the psychology of colour, we employed a fresh colour scheme of blues and natural timber throughout the space. Blue has been found to relax and promote a sense of well-being in children. Additionally, blue is a particularly ideal colour in learning environments, as it is known to inspire creativity, boost confidence and relieve stress.

As very dark blues can feel oppressive and somber, and an intense primary blue can be overly prescriptive and stimulating, we have used friendlier, softer tones of blue which have also been known to aid concentration. The rest of the materials and colour palette is kept neutral, as having too many colours in a single environment can be overwhelming. The strategy was to create a fresh and comfortable space to encourage children to feel relaxed to express themselves better.

Durability was another key consideration for the daily high traffic of users and furniture movement. Hence, we specified robust material finishes that are easy to maintain.

Well-being and lighting

Well-being was one of the critical drivers for the design. We organised the classrooms around the perimeter of the floor plan for maximum natural daylight. Simultaneously, the internal areas utilise various artificial lighting strategies to create a warm, cosy, homey atmosphere.

The reception and flexible pantry area feature curvy white ceiling panels that uplight the height of the ceiling. They are installed in a random pattern that subtly stimulates energy and gives intuitive guidance for visitors to explore the space.

Environmentally friendly materials were employed wherever possible, such as renewable timber. Specifying child-friendly finishes, including low VOC and non-toxic materials, was also essential for a healthy environment.

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Lighting Consultant: Lighting Plus Limited