

# The Kindergarten Project

## An interactive Education Space

*The management of a school built in the pre-Independence era in the eastern suburb of Mumbai, Wadala wanted to transform the kindergarten section to meet the standards of the newly formed international school.*

**Architect Manish R Dikshit**, Partner, Aum Architects who transformed the space talks about the project.

The kindergarten section was part of the South Indian Education Society school, in Wadala in Mumbai. The management wanted to upgrade the school to be at par with the new international schools with scope for more interactive education studies than the regular class room studies. We were given four rooms to develop of which one was dedicated for the staff and principal's cabin, two rooms were supposed to be the reading and interactive rooms while the last room was to be an audio visual room for the children. The client brief included accommodating

35-40 students in each classroom (total three) with a separate toilet and play area that had to be secured and made safe for the 4 year olds.

Extra care had to be taken to make the educational space more informal and interactive. To achieve this, we designed circular tables in each class with a separate section for the teachers enabling them to be part of the discussion in a group. Each table was to accommodate eight students in a circle with the teacher in the central area to monitor and teach each student without much difficulty. This will ensure that »





Aum Architects India is a firm that offers consultancy services in architectural, civil and interior design in India. The team believes in optimizing limited resources to design buildings and interiors that are functional and cost effective. Some of the prestigious projects include the office of Balaji Telefilms Pvt Ltd, The Bombay Custom House Agent's Association, Mumbai and M/s Synergy Construciton Pune among others.

– Architect Manish R Dikshit



each student actively participates in the group activity and helps the child mix and express freely in a group. The furniture was custom created on site by the contracting team. The basic frames of the circular tables were made with circular pipes so that the children do not get hurt even if they play or move under the table. The tables were then finished with DuPont Corian. Similarly the chairs have been customized as per the design. These were manufactured by Mumbai based Chemical Process Engineering Company and are made out of FRP (Fibre Reinforced Plastic).

A separate audio visual room was created with a stepped format for easy viewing of the screen. We were given the freedom to chose and design the space as we wanted. Keeping in tune



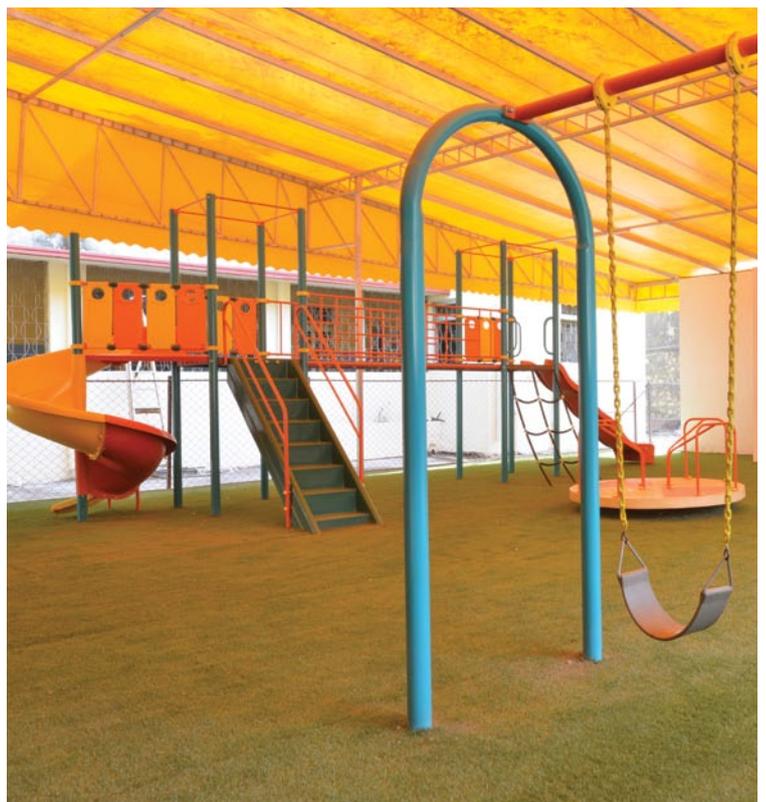


with the creativity of children, we used only primary colours in pastel shades. These are also easy on the eyes for the children and at the same time it livens up the space. Coloured glass was also used in the door and the window panes. This brought extra drama to the rooms. We used Asian paints throughout the kindergarten school since these paints conform to international VOC specifications.

The washroom and fittings were designed keeping in mind the anthropology of the children with the age group of 4-5 years. Custom made commodes from Parryware were sourced from a local decorator in Santacruz. Additionally, we eliminated mirrors from the washrooms to give a sense of privacy to the children, since a child going to a bathroom would have a caretaker along. Besides, children do not have the urge to look at themselves when in the washroom as opposed to adults who like to check their appearance while in a washroom.

All the lighting used in the design is LED lights and have been procured from a local vendor. Philips T5 Tubes were used for the cove lighting. Keeping in mind how often children fall and have accidents, extra care was taken for the flooring and homogeneous Vinyl flooring was used for the classroom flooring. The audio visual room flooring was covered in Epoxy, to enhance the curved design of the room.

The outdoor play area was designed keeping in mind the safety of the children who tend to fall off swings. We also wanted to give them a germ free environment. Artificial turf, the kind used in the FIFA world cup was used in the play area. The reason to use this quality and specification was to avoid infection



to the children if they have open wounds. We have also given 25mm rubberised carpet underneath the turf so that the children would not get an impact in case of an accident.

As proof of the success of the design, the children were overjoyed seeing the place when school reopened. Children who would usually cry when their parents dropped them off at school, this time jumped off their parents arms and raced into the classrooms.

**As told to Vandana Joshil**