Primary school

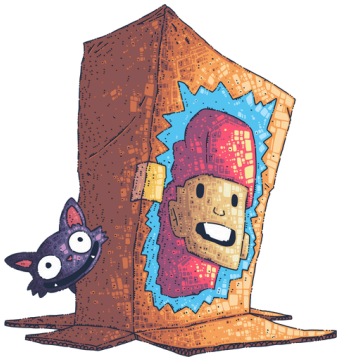
Designing an Inclusive and Inspiring Learning Space

Keywords:

school interior, classroom, corridor, sustainability, inclusion, learning environment

Target group:

primary school pupils (ages 6-11)



Objectives:

This activity invites pupils to reimagine the inside of a primary school as a place that is inclusive, inspiring, and sustainable. Pupils will reflect on how the design of classrooms, corridors, toilets, and other shared spaces can influence how people feel, learn, and behave. Using cardboard to build the basic structure of the school and combining it with LEGO, natural, and recycled materials, pupils will work in teams to create a model that reflects the values of care, comfort, and environmental responsibility. By the end, they will be able to describe key elements of a healthy and inclusive interior space.

General Guideline on Time Allocation:

The duration needed to carry out this activity may vary depending on the specific group of children. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the implementation according to the needs, interests, and dynamics of the group.

In the preparatory phase, teachers may use a variety of activities to introduce and contextualize the chosen topic. These can include discussions, videos, drawings, storytelling, or even a field trip, depending on the age and background knowledge of the children.

The main construction phase, during which children plan and build their urban element using LEGO bricks, should typically not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. However, this phase often stimulates further curiosity and questions among the children, potentially leading to extended engagement or follow-up activities. For more detailed instructions and pedagogical support on how to implement activities of INNO–kids project, please download the Teacher's Methodological Guide.

Materials and Resources Needed:

- Large sheets of cardboard (to build walls and room dividers)
- LEGO bricks of various types
- Paper, markers, crayons, and coloured pencils, scissors and glue, recycled materials such as plastic bottles, bottle caps, fabric scraps, paper rolls or packaging
- Photos of inspiring classroom and hallway designs

Note: Encourage pupils to repurpose available materials creatively. If LEGO bricks are not available, pupils may use basic craft supplies to bring their ideas to life through drawings and handmade models.

Introduction:

Begin by asking: “What do you like most about our school building — and what would you improve?” Let pupils reflect on the spaces they use every day: classrooms, hallways, toilets, libraries, art rooms, and entryways. Explain that in this activity, we will focus only on the school’s interior. Designs for outdoor areas like playgrounds and gardens are part of separate activities, but they can later be combined with this one for a full school model.

Discuss how design influences how people feel and behave. Ask:

- What makes a space feel calm, safe, or fun?
- How can we make our school more inclusive for all pupils?
- How can we reduce waste and save energy inside the building?

Procedure:

Preparation

Guide pupils to choose which parts of the school they want to model. This might include classrooms, hallways, toilets, lockers or cloakrooms, school entrance and reception, staircases, or shared spaces like libraries or dining areas.

Encourage groups to make decisions about layout, lighting, furniture, materials, and decoration.

Ask:

- How will this space feel welcoming?
- What can be reused or made from natural materials?
- How do people move, rest, and learn here?

Construction

Using cardboard as the base material, pupils begin building the interior of the school. Start by creating walls and floorplans for each room or space. Groups can work individually on their assigned areas and then join them together into a full school model.

Each group:

- Cuts and folds cardboard to create walls, doorways, and partitions
- Labels their space and adds signs (e.g. “Toilets”, “Art Room”, “Quiet Zone”)
- Furnishes the space using LEGO, recycled materials, and natural elements
- Thinks about light, air, noise, colours, plants and comfort in their space

Details

Let pupils add features that promote sustainability — like bins for sorting waste, reminders to turn off lights, or signs encouraging respect for shared space. They can also create symbolic elements, like “gratitude walls” or “friendship spots” that reflect school values.

Stories

Invite pupils to imagine a day in the life of someone using the school they built. It could be a new pupil who just arrived, a teacher preparing a creative lesson, or a child who finds a quiet space to read. What happens? What do they see, hear, and feel?

Presentation

Each group presents their part of the school and explains their design choices. They walk classmates through the space, describing how it supports inclusion, comfort, and sustainability. Pupils may also highlight any “special features” they’re proud of. Finally, all parts are brought together into a shared model of a school interior, which can be displayed for visitors or future use in combined projects.

Tips:

- Support pupils in thinking about real needs — like space to move, rest, and learn.
- Encourage a mix of realistic ideas (e.g. compost bins, low-energy lighting) and imaginative touches (e.g. LEGO robots that collect waste).
- Remind pupils that a good school building isn’t just clean — it’s caring, welcoming, and alive.

Additional Considerations:

Differentiation:
Provide additional support or simplified instructions for pupils who may require extra assistance. For advanced pupils, offer extension tasks such as researching further sustainable practices or designing more complex models.

Assessment:
Assess pupils based on their participation and engagement during discussions and hands-on activities. Evaluate the creativity, effort, collaboration, depth of understanding demonstrated in their models, critical thinking, ability to provide constructive feedback and presentation skills.

Extension Activities:

- Invite a school architect or teacher to review the designs.
- Connect this interior project to an outdoor schoolyard design from a different activity and build a complete “School of the Future.”

Curriculum Connections:

This activity integrates:
Science *(light, air, acoustics, energy use)*
Social Studies *(inclusion, cooperation, shared responsibility)*
Art *(design, creativity, construction)*
Language *(storytelling, discussion, presentation skills)*

SDG Connections:

- **SDG 4:** Quality Education – Pupils design inclusive, creative learning spaces.
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – Pupils build interior spaces that support wellbeing and reduce resource use.
- **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production – Pupils use recycled materials and reflect on thoughtful design choices.
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action – Pupils explore how indoor spaces can contribute to a low-carbon, environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Co-funded by the European Union

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