



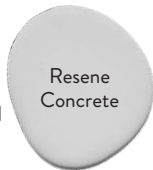
A new school approach

Three designers discuss the colour and design trends shaping the way we support growing minds.

While no project typology is static, the speed and manner in which shifts occur can vary greatly, with some transforming far faster than others. When you look back at what was happening even just twenty years ago, school design has changed drastically – arguably more than any other singular category of project.

For starters, as technology has evolved, so too have the ways it has been incorporated into classrooms. “Technology has had a profound impact over the past few decades on the nature of education and the way teachers teach. The role of educators is

left: An engaging exterior design complete with a variety of amenity spaces won Shirley Boys’ and Avonside Girls’ High School in Christchurch a Resene Total Colour Education Colour Maestro Award. It features Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Jalapeno, Resene Endeavour, Resene Cod Grey, Resene Concrete and Resene Concrete Clear gloss. Design by ASC Architects, www.ascarchitects.co.nz. Build by CPB, www.cpbcon.com.au, and Southbase, www.southbase.co.nz. Image by Olivia Spencer-Bower, www.projectstory.co.nz.



Resene Jalapeno Resene Endeavour Resene Cod Grey



now less about telling students what they need to know and now much more about facilitating enquiry and helping learners to find out what they need to know themselves. It's meant that the design of learning environments has had to change dramatically in response to these changes in teaching and learning," says Matt Every of ASC Architects.

But there has also been a strong shift in the way we think about the relationship between developing minds and design in general. An outdated and incorrect way of thinking assumed young people didn't value or appreciate beautiful design from an aesthetic perspective. However, if you consider yourself a visual or creative person and think back to when you were younger, chances are you can probably picture the schools you attended in your mind's eye – including the things that were left to be desired. You also likely appreciated beautiful buildings and spaces when you came across them, especially ones that you were able to use and interact with. As more have realised that aesthetically-pleasing spaces are not just for adults, schools have taken on more attractive and less utilitarian forms.

And then, of course, there are the most recent changes we've been faced with. While physical distancing within classrooms may or may not continue to be deemed necessary in the months and

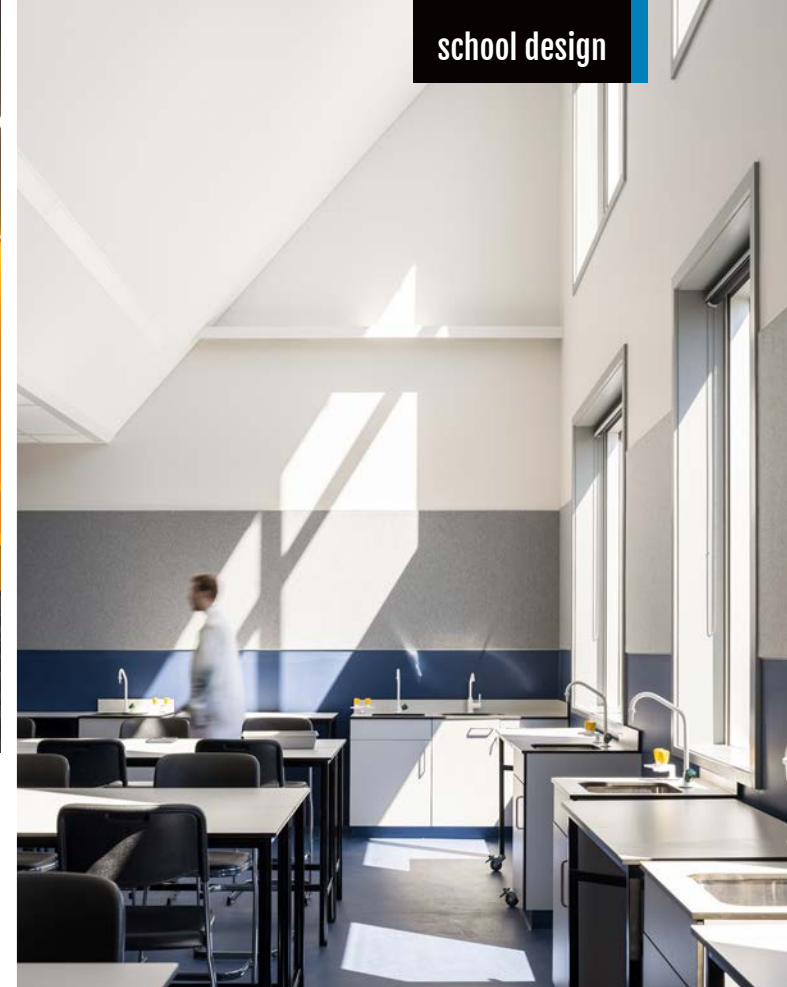
years to come, ensuring schools are designed or retrofitted with the best ventilation possible will continue to be a consideration for reducing the spread of airborne infections.

"The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown requirements forced schools, educators and learners to dramatically adapt to new ways of teaching and learning from home," says Matt. "The experience of this and the lessons learnt have started to influence new innovations being incorporated into current learning environment designs. It will be exciting to watch how these new ideas are further developed by architects and designers in the next few years."

We spoke more with Matt and two other designers about other factors that are affecting the way schools are designed and built now, and considerations for the years ahead.

Home sweet homeroom

Much like with commercial office design, some designers have noted a move towards increasing the 'residential' feel of classrooms and common areas. Michael O'Sullivan of Bull O'Sullivan Architecture is one of them. "This approach is particularly suited for education facilities catering for young children where safe and nurturing home-like spaces should be encouraged," he says.



● **above and left:** Neutral tones with muted versions of the Christchurch Boys' High School's colours were used as the primary colour scheme throughout the design of the Caddick & Caldwell Block buildings, which helps build upon the sense of community and provides unique spaces which are identifiable as CBHS. Walls in Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Triple Sea Fog, Resene Stack, Resene Half Stack, Resene Licorice and Resene April Sun, ceiling in Resene Ceiling Paint tinted to Resene Sea Fog, interior plywood sealed in Resene Aquaclear satin and balustrades and exposed steel columns in Resene Uracryl 403 in a custom Resene colour. Design by Athfield Architects. Build by Southbase. Painting by Jeff Dermott, www.jeffdermotts.co.nz. Images by Dennis Radermacher, www.lightforge.co.nz.

●	Resene Sea Fog	●	Resene Half Stack	●	Resene Licorice
●	Resene Triple Sea Fog	●	Resene Stack	●	Resene April Sun

top tip

Resene FilmPro
Digital Green

Resene FilmPro Digital Green is a professional quality set paint in a tough 100% acrylic flat finish that is perfect for creating a 'green screen' in school maker spaces.

While Matt agrees that creating a more residential feel within schools can be appropriate for new learning environments, he believes this needs to be done in such a way that the materials and finishes specified can withstand the harsh rigours of a school setting.

"Whether or not there's a trend to design commercial office or educational spaces to be more home-like, the core subjective is to create spaces to cater for all types of personalities and encourage individuals to thrive," adds Rachel Xu of Pacific Environments NZ.

This evolution goes hand-in-hand with the increase in societal awareness that different learning needs and sensitivities exist. Rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach that used to be the norm, there is a better understanding that ASD, ADHD, sound, sight and movement sensitivities, dyslexia and other needs require specialised environments and strategies for learning. Thanks to the fierce advocacy by parents, educators and students themselves, far more headway has been made in the educational design sphere than any other project typology.

"Providing good Universal Design so that all educational facilities can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability is a key requirement of successful contemporary learning," says Matt. "The most important element to get right when designing any learning environment is the focus on learners' needs and the acknowledgement



that learners learn in different ways. Learning environments need to be flexible enough to respond to this diversity and future-focused so that they can be adapted as technology and other changes take place in society."

Rachel agrees that the places students learn need to be adaptable environments that meet the specific needs of their users, rather than expecting learners to fit into a specific box. She recalls when she was a student and the effect old ways of thinking had on her education. "We sat in rows and we never moved around in the classroom. All 30-40 kids looked at one teacher and tried to absorb whatever the teachers 'fed' us all day. But nowadays, educational space design broadly supports creating an open and flexible learning environment, which provides

a valuable platform for groups, collaboration and stimulation. But these types of spaces are only where extroverts thrive. For the kids who prefer to go off by themselves or just want to work alone, they may be seen as outliers or, even worse, as problem cases. This is when carefully designed nook-and-cranny spaces with different colours and textures come in, which empower these introverts and provide shelter for those who might be sensitive to noise and anxiety from the constant gaze of others.

"I sincerely believe both our working and learning environments should encourage casual, chatty café-style types of interactions. They are great for introverts and extroverts alike. But students need much more privacy, more freedom and more autonomy. Schools need to be teaching

above: Semi-private breakout rooms where students can work independently or in small groups while being enveloped in mood-enhancing hues is one idea for offering spaces tailored to different learning needs. Thorndon School in Wellington features walls in Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Lochmara, Resene Roadster and Resene House White, ceiling in Resene Ceiling Paint in Resene White and plywood walls sealed in Resene Aquaclear satin. Design by McKenzie Higham Architects, www.mckenzie-higham.co.nz. Build by Hawkins Construction, www.hawkins.co.nz. Painting by Metropolitan Painters, and Freear Philip, www.freearphilip.co.nz. Image by Paul McCredie.

	Resene White		Resene Lochmara
	Resene House White		Resene Roadster

kids to work together, for sure, but we also need to be teaching them how to work on their own because that is where deep thoughts come from, in part.”

Rachel believes that designers and builders of schools should endeavour to learn more about human behaviour when imagining how people will be using educational spaces. “We should really try to put ourselves in the occupants’ shoes. Not simply architects and interior designers, but even engineers should be involved in finding ways to provide extra allowances that would support teachers and students. For example, mechanical services might have additional acoustic control in the withdrawal space to cater to sound-sensitive kids. Extra structural members could be incorporated in a spot where it would be great to hang a hammock for autistic kids who need to constantly move. Space height and width proportions could be better calculated for kids seeking more enclosed zones, or the lighting lux levels in certain areas could be controlled for sight sensitive users. The list goes on, and it really is a massive team effort to create spaces that can effectively adapt to

different learning needs; but investing that time to know the end-users during the early design stages always helps create better spaces.

“Providing a culturally-inclusive learning and working environment is something else I think we’ll see more of going forward. Societally, we may still be getting used to flexible and collaborative learning and being inclusive of differently abled populations. But as a proud immigrant countries, there is still much room to improve to create environments to celebrate diverse cultures and provide a safe space for practising customs across New Zealand and Australia,” she says.

In a perfect world

School projects often have many stakeholders to please and funding can be notoriously tight, which makes it challenging to design and build in a way that ticks every box. But in a dream scenario where there were no time or money constraints, we asked Matt, Michael and Rachel what they would prioritise or do differently.

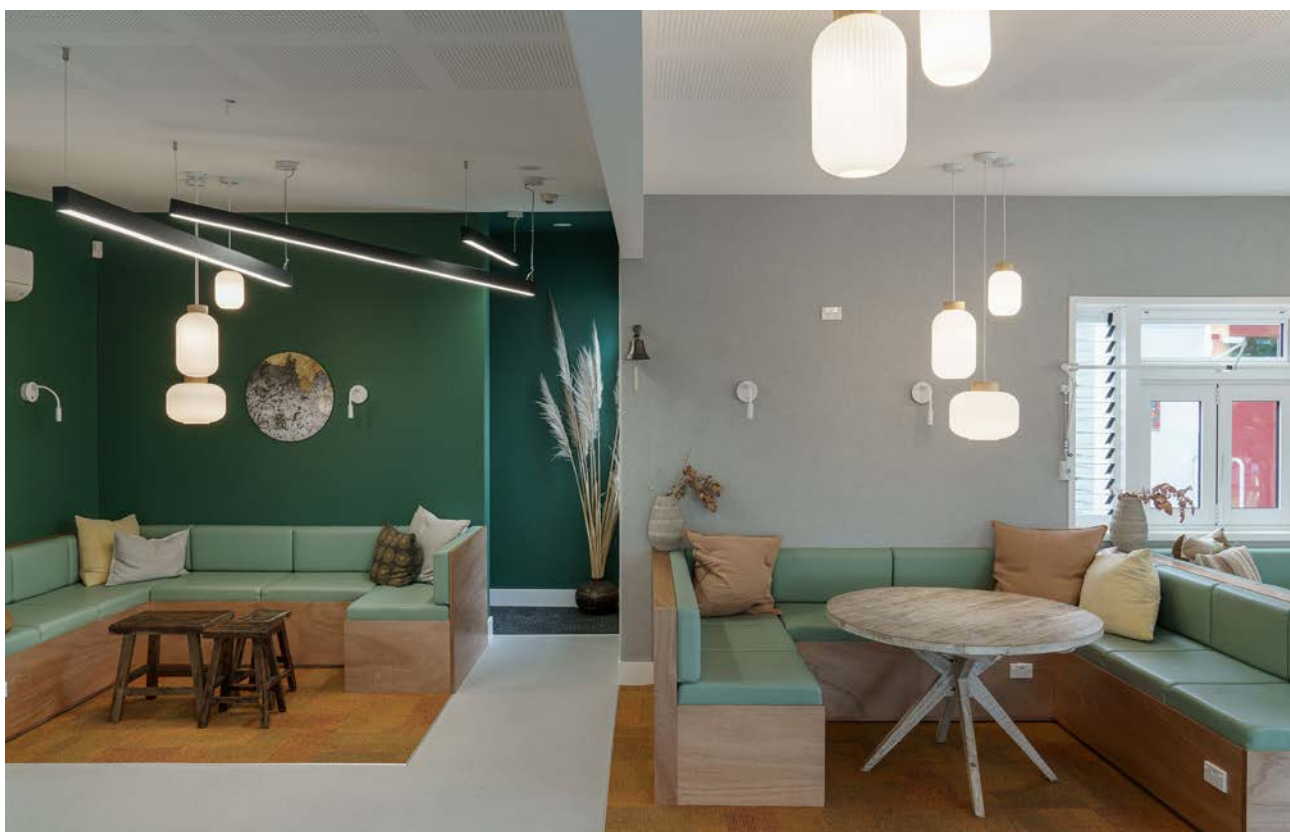
below: Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Mother Nature and Resene Alabaster was used for the walls and ceiling in the new staffroom design of the Huapai District School Block 2 Refurbishment to create a restful, zen-like space for teachers to relax. Resene Unwind in Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen and Resene Enamacryl waterborne enamel highlight the doors to the staff toilets, breaking up the rest of the Resene Alabaster walls and ceiling. The project won a Resene Total Colour Education Colour Maestro Award in 2021. Design by Pacific Environments, www.pacificenvironments.co.nz. Build by Accent Construction, www.accentconstruction.co.nz. Images by Barry Tobin.

Resene Alabaster

Resene Dusted Blue

Resene Unwind

Resene Mother Nature








did you know?

Unlike normal whiteboards, Resene Write-on Wall Paint is designed to work with your project's colour scheme and décor by allowing your chosen Resene wall colour to show through its clear finish. You can specify whatever Resene colour suits your project best; however, light colours work best for standard dry erase markers and dark colours work best for neon markers. Once dry and cured, whiteboard markers can be used to write all over the wall without damaging the surface and can be removed with a soft cloth or whiteboard eraser.

left: Walls in Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Turkish Delight, rafters in Resene Hi-Glo waterborne gloss tinted to Resene Pohutukawa, posts in Resene Hi-Glo tinted to Resene Turbo and battens in Resene Hi-Glo tinted to Resene Poppy, Resene Turbo and Resene Endeavour set a friendly and welcoming tone on the exterior of Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Pihī o Te Purapura Pai in Birkdale, Auckland. Inside, Resene Enamacryl tinted to Resene Tangerine and Resene Turbo bring cheerful energy. The project was rewarded with a Resene Total Colour Education Award. Design by Bull O'Sullivan Architecture, www.bosarchitecture.co.nz. Build and painting by Reid Builders. Images by Patrick Reynolds.




	Resene Turkish Delight		Resene Tangerine		Resene Turbo
	Resene Scrumptious		Resene Daredevil		Resene Opal
	Resene Poppy		Resene Pohutukawa		Resene Endeavour



“An unlimited budget would offer opportunities for larger spaces, more expensive finishes and enable a lot more technology to be incorporated into designs, but I don't believe the fundamentals of the learning environments that we would provide would change. We would still aim to provide learning environments that focus on the diverse needs of the learners and that are flexible and adaptable to changing needs,” says Matt.

Michael believes what he would do in this dream scenario would depend on the type of school and ages of the learners, as well as what the site offers, but that there are plenty of creative opportunities that could be explored. “For example, for a preschool facility, integrating built-in exploratory spaces such as roof gardens, elevated netted landscapes, bridges and slides into the overall design would be great fun.”

right and below: The Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Student Commons feature Resene SpaceCote Low Sheen tinted to Resene Dingley, Resene Sushi, Resene Green Meets Blue, Resene Artemis and Resene Bi Hoki across a mix of lounge, study and recreation areas. Design by Marchese Partners, www.marchesepartners.com, and Wingate Architects, www.wingatearchitects.com. Build and painting by ICON, www.icon.co. Images by Sam Hartnett.

-  Resene Bi Hoki
-  Resene Sushi
-  Resene Dingley
-  Resene Artemis
-  Resene Green Meets Blue

For Rachel, her goal would be to create a self-sufficient type of architecture that could give back to the community – literally. “Apart from fulfilling internal space criteria, it would ideally also generate enough power to cover daily use and any surplus energy would be distributed to surrounding households. The building would collect and utilise stormwater for its toilet and laundry facilities, and any surplus supply would be treated for consumption. It would have a communal garden that students would look after, and the resulting food supply would be distributed among the community. A high-end STEM lab would be a must, with all the tools imaginable to expose learners young and old to infinite possibilities.”

Supporting students through colour

No matter what site or footprint you’re working with, the limitations of what can be spent, how large the student population or how small the town, creative use of colour is something that always fits within budget.

“The best learning environments are creative and stimulating environments, and colour can be such a powerful tool in these spaces as a way of creating a strong sense of place,” says Matt. “Bold use of colour can be a great way to add vibrancy and strength to any design at little to no additional cost.”

Michael echoed the power that colour carries and says using the right colours can be beneficial to young children in promoting moods, providing stimulation and inspiration for growing minds. “We definitely think it will be used more in the future of schools.”

When asked what colours he expects to dominate this project typology in the coming years, Michael says he expects to see a mixture of rich bold hues such as Resene Daredevil and Resene Scrumptious paired with calmer neutral tones such as Resene Opal.

On her recent Huapai District School Block 2 Refurbishment project, Rachel found colour to be a hugely important tool in the



design but that it was vital to select her hues carefully. “Colours affect us psychologically and emotionally. Sure, educational spaces might be colourful, but we should be mindful of how colour could impact the occupants. Before diving into selecting the colours that might look great on the renders, I typically study how I want to enhance the user experience in each zone. For this project, I picked a rather deep yet vibrant red, Resene Pohutukawa, in places where the school doesn’t want students to dwell too long. I selected a rich earthy tone, Resene Mother Earth, where I wanted the teachers to relax and feel they have been transported into a completely different space in their staffroom. In places designed to spark creativity, endure messiness and fun, a loud expressive colour – in this case, Resene Spotlight – was on top of the list.”

“As we’ve entered a third year of the pandemic, more of us have returned to shared learning and workplaces, so we might see even more use of contrast with the aim of refreshing image and allowing us to differentiate home/school life again. I predict more will fancy deep yet vibrant tones going forward.” **BW**

For more on the latest colour trends, check out the Red Alert section on page 4. Or get regular updates direct to your inbox by subscribing to our *BlackWhite* newsletter. Sign up at www.resene.com/specifierregister.

