

Adapting the school environment for nursery provision

Top Tips For School-based Nurseries

1 Invest in durable, sustainable resources

If possible, choose furniture and materials with a 10-year lifespan to reduce replacement costs.

Well-designed furniture supports independence and safety while withstanding daily wear and tear.



4 Plan nursery infrastructure in advance

Ensure plumbing, electrical points, and room layout are planned before construction begins.

Designing and planning your space early can avoid costly and disruptive retrofitting in the future.



2 Create outdoor spaces that connect children with nature

It can help to develop spaces like wildlife gardens and mud kitchens to offer sensory-rich experiences

These spaces are especially valuable in urban settings where access to nature may be limited.

5 Repurpose existing school spaces

You may want to think about cosmetic changes like low partitions and movable shelving, to transform underused areas into vibrant nursery zones.

3 Include calming and sensory zones indoors

Designate a cosy area with soft furnishings, dimmable lighting, and sensory resources.

Breakout zones allow for small-group and one-to-one work, as well as providing an inclusive retreat for emotional regulation.



6 Support sensory and SEND needs

Consider including tactile strips on steps, acoustic tiles, and a sensory corner with fibre optic lights and weighted cushions.

Use visual schedules and “now and next” boards to aid transitions.