



The design creates multipurpose areas that support ease of movement around the school | Photo source Rosan Bosch Studio and IDOM

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A PANDEMIC-PROOF SCHOOL DESIGN

 EDUCATION

A school design creates flexible indoor and outdoor spaces that can be expanded and adapted to changing needs in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

Spotted: The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has fallen heavily on children around the world, many of whom have missed out on more than a year of in-person education. As a result, educators have realised the importance of building greater flexibility in schools and educational systems. In Lima, Peru, one school is adapting to this with a campus designed to allow teaching to take place both indoors and outdoors.

Designed by architecture firms Rosan Bosch Studio and IDOM, the new Markham College Lower School will trade traditional indoor classrooms in a large building for adaptable, open teaching spaces that are naturally ventilated and can be expanded or shrunk to cater to different numbers of students. The design creates multipurpose areas that support ease of movement around the school and promotes an educational approach that allows children and teachers to easily work together.

The building façade is made up of balconies, vertical gardens and small courtyards. The school will also be constructed largely of natural, sustainable and recycled materials, sourced locally where possible. It will have a net-zero carbon footprint and rely on natural ventilation, rather than energy-inefficient recirculated air. When complete, the 10,000-square-metre school will accommodate 750 students from ages six to twelve, over three storeys.

Rosan Bosch Studio has described taking inspiration from the Peruvian legend of the “Talking River,” where those who sit on the banks of the Rímac River and listen carefully can hear the waters tell beautiful stories. The studio [explains](#) that similar to a river, “the design encourages a meandering flow through the campus ground ... the paths take shape as whirlwinds and new divisions throughout

the school's large patios, outdoor areas and rooftop playground, bringing the learning conversations to all corners of the campus.”

Although the pandemic is still with us, architecture has already begun adapting, and a number of firms have created different types of “pandemic-proof” spaces. Some that we have recently covered here at Springwise include spaces that can be adapted for new [working patterns](#) and multi-purpose, [open-air venues](#) that can be easily put up and taken down.

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Takeaway:

While Lima has a warm climate that makes year-round outdoor learning possible, there is no reason why a similar approach cannot be adapted for use in colder climates. In fact, there is ample evidence that spending time outdoors can improve children's personal development, confidence and educational outcomes – as well as fostering a connection with the natural world. A number of countries have incorporated outdoor learning into their curriculum, and the pandemic has seemingly accelerated this interest. One day, all schools may adopt an indoor-outdoor approach.