

Tech edge at new-age school

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Your child could be revising his nursery rhymes from recorded voices in the school corridors, and paint on the classroom board using a computer toolbar. All in the cool confines of a centrally air-conditioned environment.

Calcutta is set to have another futuristic educational institute—Indus Valley World School. Located off the EM Bypass, behind Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, the school, spread over 45,000 sq ft, will take off from the next academic session in April 2008.

Promoted by the management that runs BD Memorial School in Calcutta and Khaitan Public School in Noida, the new school promises to ride high on technology. CCTVs will monitor security on the premises. Each classroom will be equipped with an active board. "The screen will be bigger and provide better visibility than normal boards. It will be connected to the laptop each teacher will carry. That way, children can paint with an active pen that acts as a mouse as well as see multimedia presentations or pages from the Net shown by the teacher," explains principal advisor Usha Mehta.

The corridors of the ground floor, meant for toddlers, have been turned to fairy lands with vibrant 3-D fibre models looking out from the walls. "These characters from 25 nursery rhymes also tell the respective rhyme



SMART TOOLS

- **The Heritage School:** AC rooms, computer and TV in classroom, school notices and homework on website, swimming pool
- **DPS Megacity:** TV and computer in classroom, CCTV, swimming pool
- **Calcutta International School:** AC rooms, video-conference for teacher recruitment
- **Laxmipat Singhania:** AC rooms

A theme-based pre-primary classroom at Indus Valley World School. Picture by Sanat Kumar Sinha

through an inbuilt sound system if a child presses the corresponding button," says in-charge Reshma Bhattacharya.

The rooms are all based on specific themes. If one room has figures like Sourav Ganguly, Sania Mirza and Narain Karthikeyan at play, another features a giant tabla and piano keys on the floor and music personalities on the walls. Other classrooms would be based on themes like body parts and fairy tales. "We want

to impart practical lessons through the environment," Bhattacharya says. So, at places the floor will have zebra crossing marks, to acquaint kids with traffic rules.

The school will try to keep children in touch with Nature. The ground floor will be conceptualised on the five elements—space, air, fire, earth and water. The facade will be a giant forest designed by an Australian company. Amid the trees there will be life-size ani-

mal and bird figures which will call out on being touched by children. "The facade is a jungle experience with a combination of desert and snowland. Each zone carries a temperature chart," Bhattacharya points out. A bridge is being constructed with an artificial stream beneath, housing aquatic animals.

Mehta insists that children will not be put under pressure of rote learning. "There will be no tests or homework till Stan-

dard II; only continuous assessment. Each child will be assessed only when the teacher feels he or she is ready."

The school is starting with CBSE affiliation but plans to offer international boards later. "We also intend to have day-boarding facilities as an option," says Bhattacharya. "This will be especially helpful for academically weak children who will be offered remedial classes if they stay back," Mehta adds.