



△ **INTO THE BLUE** There's a laid-back elegance about this bedroom scheme. Neutral walls, open shelving and a plain chest of drawers offer a blank canvas that can be refreshed easily and often with bedlinen, fabrics and cushions. The quilt is made from Raindrops in Blue, £35m, and backed with Marley, £23.50m, both Clarke & Clarke, 01706 242010, clarke-clarke.com.

▷ **CREATIVE THINKING** One way to address the stream of artworks brought home from nursery or school is to display them gallery-style in matching frames. Remove the glass and cover the backs with plain-coloured card, then affix the creations using Blu Tack for easy swap-overs. For a good range of frames, try Habitat, 0344 499 4686, habitat.co.uk.



EXPERT VIEW KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS



HENRIETTE VON STOCKHAUSEN, interior designer and founder of VSP Interiors, 07787 574192, vspinteriors.com.

- In children's bedrooms that double as playrooms and homework spaces, use pull-out desk tops that store away in a high bed or as part of a cupboard/storage system. As well as being versatile, this maximises floor space.
- A homework area, with one or more workstations, can be created in another part of the house. Provide purpose-built shelving for books and materials, and desk space with a pin board above for each child's to-do lists and party invitations.
- A bed with a pull-out trundle underneath for overnight guests is useful in bedrooms that are tight on space. You could have a higher built-in bed frame made to create enough space for two trundles to fit underneath, with further storage either side. Hanging a curtain around the bed to separate off the sleeping area adds privacy and is popular with teenagers.
- It is essential to get the lighting right. Go for a layered scheme with numerous sources of light, all on dimmer switches to allow for as many adjustments as possible. Make sure to include bright, overhead lighting for daytime activities and task lights for homework and reading in bed. Shelves look more inviting when illuminated and create a cosy backdrop for reading or relaxing.
- Don't go crazy on colour trends or favourite characters. Children often go off these very quickly. Instead, keep the backdrop simple and classic. You can keep up-to-date with fads relatively inexpensively using accessories and art.
- Be wary of choosing vintage electrical designs, such as lighting, as they may not meet safety standards and can get extremely hot. Equally, issues of internet security can make the inclusion of items like computers in the scheme problematic.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LOUPE IMAGES/POLLY WREFFORD (CREATIVE THINKING); SEMMI PHOTOGRAPHY (TALL ORDER); RICHARD POWERS (A STEP UP)



SLEEPING BEAUTY Mix chic, timeless furniture with vintage fabrics in calming colours to create a sophisticated scheme that will segue from early years to young adult. Similar bed, Snooze bed in Putty, Ochre, 020 7096 7372, ochre.net.



◁ **SWEET TALKING** The passion for pink is often short-lived, but this graceful girls' bunk room, by VSP Interiors, 07787 574192, vspinteriors.com, is a fine example of how it can be done tastefully.

▽ **TOP SECRET** Children love to have a space of their own. This bed, by Caroline Cobbold, carolinecobbolddesign.com, offers a wonderful sense of privacy, with walls incorporating handy shelves in a design reminiscent of a four-poster.



ADVICE CHOOSING A BED

FREESTANDING DESIGNS

This type of bed is easy to move and gives the flexibility to rearrange a room. Traditional wrought-iron beds are a good investment that will last for years, needing only the replacement of the mattress every eight years or so. However, they are limited when it comes to sleepovers and storage. For a more multipurpose option, look for a single bed with a trundle underneath or integrated storage drawers for clothes or toys. Some manufacturers offer kits that convert their standard junior beds to full-sized ones. "This helps with otherwise expensive transition periods," says Amanda Short, founder of Nubie, 01825 724160, nubie.co.uk.

BUILT-IN OPTIONS

There are three scenarios in which built-in beds make sense: in small rooms where floor space is tight, when you need to have multiple beds in a single room, and in attic rooms where furniture arrangements can be tricky. They are relatively expensive, so it's worth considering the age of the child and how long you plan to stay in the house. Bunny Turner, of Turner Pocock, 020 3463 2390, turnerpocock.co.uk, favours using a 120cm-wide mattress if space allows, so the beds can be used by adults, too. "Other ways to ensure they stand the test of time is to opt for a neutral design. We often clad beds in tongue and groove and paint them in a muted shade, and find that the young children we originally designed them for are happy to keep them well into their teenage years."