

Case Study

Full Electrical Rewire Project at OA-Suffolk

Client Overview

AltMarket Services supported Olive Academies with the delivery of a fully CIF-funded electrical infrastructure upgrade project at one of the trust's alternative provision academies in Stowmarket, Suffolk.

The project involved a full electrical rewire across three teaching and administration blocks, comprising two buildings dating from the 1980s and a further block constructed in the early 2000s. As an alternative provision setting, careful planning and coordination were essential to ensure works were delivered safely and with minimal disruption to the school environment.

The Challenge

The existing electrical installation across the school site had become outdated and was no longer considered fit for purpose. Over time, the system had been subject to inconsistent maintenance and alteration works, resulting in a number of operational, compliance, and health and safety concerns.

Across the three blocks, numerous socket outlets were found to be damaged, broken, or non-functioning. Existing distribution boards had been modified and extended over the lifetime of the buildings, leading to inconsistencies in installation quality and concerns regarding long-term reliability and safety.

In several teaching and office areas, insufficient socket provision had resulted in the regular use of extension leads and trailing cables, creating potential trip hazards and limiting the functionality of spaces for staff and pupils.

Lighting levels throughout the buildings were also poor and no longer met modern expectations for educational environments. As part of the project, lighting upgrades were required to help achieve more suitable illumination levels in line with current guidance and standards for school environments, including relevant Building Regulations and Department for Education guidance and recommendations relating to lighting and internal learning environments.

Containment installations within previously extended or altered areas were generally found to be below modern standards, with inconsistencies in routing, protection, and overall finish.

The Trust's Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) identified a number of observations requiring corrective action, including several recommendations

classified as requiring remedial works within a one-year period, further highlighting the need for a comprehensive upgrade project.

Our Approach

AltMarkt Services appointed a qualified Electrical Engineer to undertake a detailed survey and assessment of the existing electrical installation across the school site. This enabled a comprehensive understanding of the condition, capacity, and any compliance issues affecting the estate, forming the basis for both the technical design and funding application.

Using the findings from the survey process, AltMarkt prepared the full technical specification and successfully secured funding through the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) programme.

Following funding approval, AltMarkt managed the project from tender stage through to completion under the JCT Design and Build Contract procurement route. This included administration of the contract, coordination with the contractor and stakeholders, monitoring of works, and management of project delivery throughout all phases.

Given the live educational environment, careful programming of works was essential. Major electrical infrastructure works, including main distribution board changeovers and mains connection works, were scheduled during school holiday periods to minimise operational disruption. Smaller power and socket installation works were undertaken during evening periods throughout term time, allowing the school to remain fully operational during the day.

AltMarkt maintained regular liaison with the Trust's Senior Leadership Team throughout the project to ensure works were carefully coordinated around the needs of the school and its pupils.

The primary challenge during delivery related to the changeover of the mains electrical distribution systems. Through careful planning, contractor coordination, and communication with the school, the works were successfully managed and completed with minimal disruption.

The Solution / Works Delivered

The project delivered a comprehensive upgrade of the electrical infrastructure across all three school blocks, with the scope of works tailored to the condition and age of each building.

Within the two original 1980s blocks, full electrical rewires were undertaken, including the installation of new distribution boards, upgraded containment systems, replacement small power installations, and new energy-efficient LED lighting throughout. Emergency lighting systems were also replaced and integrated with the existing fire alarm systems to improve overall life safety compliance.

Works within the newer 2000s block focused primarily on lighting upgrades, containment improvements, and adjustments to the existing small power installations, reflecting the comparatively newer condition of the building and its electrical infrastructure.

Across all areas, the introduction of modern LED lighting significantly improved illumination levels throughout the teaching and administrative spaces, whilst also delivering improved energy efficiency and reducing ongoing maintenance requirements for the trust.

All works were carefully phased and coordinated to align with school operations, ensuring the project was delivered safely and efficiently within a live educational environment.

Outcome & Impact

The project successfully addressed all issues identified within the Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR), with the completed works achieving compliance with current electrical and building safety standards, including the requirements of BS 7671 (IET Wiring Regulations), relevant Building Regulations, and associated guidance applicable to educational environments.

The upgraded electrical infrastructure has provided the school with a significantly safer, more reliable, and future-proofed system, reducing ongoing maintenance concerns and improving the overall resilience of the estate.

The installation of modern LED lighting greatly enhanced the internal learning and working environment across the site. Improved illumination levels and upgraded electrical functionality were well received by staff and building users, creating more practical and comfortable teaching and administrative spaces.

Throughout the delivery phase, careful programming and coordination ensured disruption to the school was kept to an absolute minimum. The Trust's Senior Leadership Team particularly valued the collaborative approach taken during the works, alongside the successful management of the project within a live educational setting.

Client Feedback

"We have worked with AltMarkt Services across a range of projects, including CIF bid applications and longer-term estate planning.

Their support has covered project management, contract administration, and inspection of works, and throughout this they have provided a consistently professional and reliable service. Communication has been clear and timely, and any issues that arose were addressed quickly and effectively.

With their support, we successfully secured four CIF bids across two school sites, resulting in meaningful upgrades to the facilities for both staff and pupils. The projects were delivered smoothly, and the overall process was well managed from start to finish.

We would happily recommend AltMarkt Services to any other Schools, Trusts, or business' looking for professional, dependable support."

Kuda Mika – Facilities & Infrastructure Manager – Olive Academies

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