

Case Study

Kitchen Teaching Space Reconfiguration at OA-Suffolk

Client Overview

AltMarket Services supported Olive Academies with the reconfiguration and refurbishment of an existing kitchenette area at one of the trust's alternative provision academies in Stowmarket, Suffolk.

The project was undertaken to create a dedicated kitchen teaching space capable of accommodating up to eight students, supporting the school's curriculum and providing pupils with practical life skills through structured cooking and food preparation activities.

The existing space was limited in functionality and unsuitable for the school's teaching requirements, requiring careful redesign and improvement works to create a safe, practical, and engaging learning environment.

The Challenge

The existing kitchenette area was originally designed as a small staff facility and was no longer suitable for the school's evolving curriculum requirements. Over time, the space had become outdated and underutilised, with the existing staffroom provision elsewhere within the school making the area largely redundant.

Internally, the condition of the existing fit-out had deteriorated significantly. Kitchen cupboards and drawers were damaged, several handles were missing, and units had become worn and unstable through age and limited maintenance.

The layout and infrastructure of the room were also insufficient to support its intended conversion into a practical teaching environment for up to eight students. The existing installation provided only a single sink, hob, and extract point, with limited electrical capacity and small power distribution available for the additional cooking appliances required as part of the teaching curriculum.

Storage and worktop provision were inadequate for group teaching activities, limiting the functionality of the space and preventing effective delivery of practical cooking lessons.

To create a compliant and functional teaching environment, upgrades to electrical installations and ventilation systems were required in line with current

Building Regulations and relevant standards associated with ventilation, electrical safety, and educational learning environments.

Spatial limitations within the existing layout also required alterations to the internal arrangement of the room. This included the removal of an internal stud partition wall to improve circulation space and accommodate the required student capacity. In addition, the existing carpet finish, which had become firmly bonded to the concrete floor slab over time, required mechanical removal and preparation works prior to installation of new finishes and floor levelling.

Our Approach

AltMarket Services worked closely with the school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) throughout the project, building upon an existing initial layout concept and proposed teaching space arrangement developed by the school.

Using the indicative design as a foundation, AltMarket developed the technical specification for the flooring, electrical, and mechanical elements of the project, ensuring that all proposed works aligned with current regulations, operational requirements, and the intended teaching functionality of the space.

AltMarket also managed the procurement process through a competitive tendering exercise using the JCT Design and Build Contract route, before overseeing delivery of the works on site and coordinating contractor activities throughout the construction phase.

Given the live educational environment, careful planning and communication were essential. Demolition and enabling works were undertaken during normal term time, requiring close coordination with the school to minimise disruption to staff and students whilst maintaining a safe working environment.

The project was delivered within a compressed programme period, requiring effective sequencing and coordination of multiple trades. Despite the challenging timeframe, the works were completed with only a short one-week extension to the programme, primarily due to the unforeseen complexity associated with the mechanical removal of the existing carpet finish from the concrete floor slab.

The school's SLT remained actively involved throughout the project, from initial planning and design coordination through to completion and handover of the new teaching space.

The Solution / Works Delivered

The completed project transformed the former kitchenette area into a fully functional kitchen teaching facility designed to support practical cooking lessons as part of the school's curriculum.

The refurbishment included the installation of four dedicated cooking stations, each comprising new electric hobs, ovens, and associated extraction systems, supported by upgraded small power and mechanical installations throughout the space. In total, four new extractor units were installed to provide suitable ventilation in line with the intended teaching use of the room.

The project also included the installation of new kitchen cupboards, worktops, sink units, and a dishwasher, alongside the provision of emergency electrical shut-off systems to support the safe operation of the teaching environment.

To improve functionality and maximise usable workspace, a central island unit was constructed, creating additional preparation and teaching space for both staff and students.

Extensive refurbishment works were undertaken throughout the room, including new flooring finishes, redecoration, electrical upgrades, and associated builders' works, resulting in a fresh, modern, and fully operational teaching facility aligned with the school's educational requirements.

Outcome & Impact

The completed project has provided the school with a high-quality, fully functional kitchen teaching facility that is fit for purpose and aligned with the school's curriculum requirements.

The new space now enables the school to effectively deliver practical cooking and life skills education within a dedicated environment designed specifically for teaching use. This has supported the school in achieving its intended educational outcomes and strengthening the delivery of curriculum activities for students attending the provision.

The school's Senior Leadership Team and staff were extremely pleased with the completed result and commended the efficient delivery of the project from tender stage through to completion. Despite the challenging programme constraints, the project was delivered with only a short one-week extension to the programme, which was fully understood and accepted by all parties due to the unforeseen complexity associated with removal of the existing floor finishes.

Staff have since praised both the functionality and quality of the new facility, highlighting the positive impact the space has had on student engagement and participation. Students have taken significant pride in the new environment and continue to respond positively to lessons delivered within the teaching kitchen space.

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 businesses looking for professional, dependable support."

Kuda Mika – Facilities & Infrastructure Manager – Olive Academies

Visuals



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