

Expanding Horizons

September 2025 Update



Several exciting developments have been taking place at Austin Friars over the summer holidays which will benefit current and future pupils.

This work is a result of the Expanding Horizons campaign and we are incredibly grateful to those who have supported us throughout its journey.

As the School begins academic year 2025/26, we have reached a key milestone in the School's development plans and want to share a progress update with our community.



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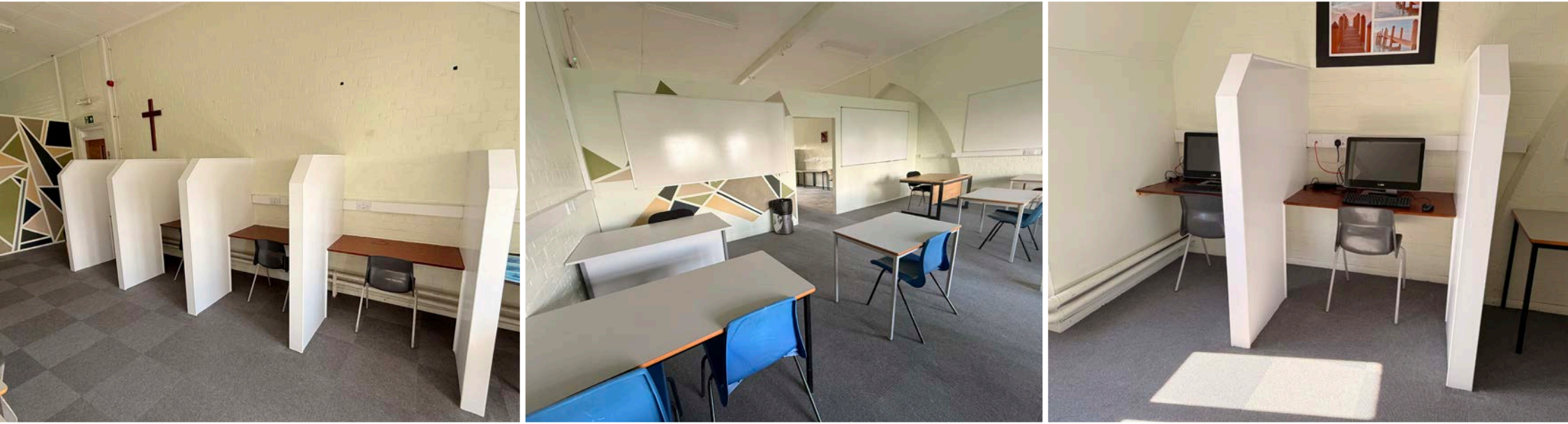


Our School's Art Department, located on the lower ground floor, has been transformed to benefit visual creatives and now includes the following modern facilities:

- **IT suite** – including Mac Mini desktop PCs
(with sound baffling installed to improve acoustics)
- **Photography studio**
(with neutral wall colour and space for greenscreen work to be undertaken)
- **Darkroom**
(for processing photographic film and making prints)
- **Gallery space and VI Form area**
(with sound baffling + original parquet flooring which was uncovered during initial groundworks)
- **Ceramic kiln room**
(a ventilated space to fire and harden ceramic pottery and sculptures)



VI Form Improvements



The Estates Manager and his team have built new studio cubicles and installed two new desktops for students to use during independent study sessions.

New co-working space whiteboards have been hung and new blinds have been installed in the VI Form area.

The wifi has also been boosted in this area of the School.

Many thanks to David (Assistant Estates Manager) for his ingenuity in seeing this to fruition!



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New Sporting Facilities

Padel Courts



TENNIS
FOR BRITAIN



ENGLAND
NETBALL



Since announcing our plans to build new sporting facilities earlier this year (as reported on the [BBC](#)), talks to secure funding and support from a number of notable organisations have taken place - including the Lawn Tennis Association, England Netball, and The Football Foundation.

A planning application for four Padel Courts has been submitted to Cumberland Council, with the facility forecasted to be operational in early 2026. These will be built using funds raised under the Expanding Horizons campaign.



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New Sporting Facilities

3G Multisports Pitch

As part of the exciting plans to enhance our sporting provision, investigative groundworks have recently been carried out by our partners who are developing the bid for a new 3G multisport pitch at Austin Friars.

This important stage ensures that the site is fully prepared and suitable for the proposed development.

The bid itself is being progressed with the support of the Football Foundation and is scheduled for submission in April 2026.



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Changing Rooms

The school's architect has been busy this summer!

We have refined the original plans for new changing rooms to ensure they will benefit school pupils and, in parallel, meet the needs of our future sports facility plans.

When built, these will be a significant upgrade to our current changing arrangements.

Safeguarding has been a key consideration in the design of the new changing rooms, ensuring they provide a safe and secure environment for all users.

Food Technology Department

Match funding has been sought to fund this development plan initiative, and the School are in the final stages of securing this arrangement.

The hope is to initiate the build in the first half of this academic year (benefitting current pupils as soon as practicable).

We will announce the plans for the Food Technology Department soon.



Forest School



The first Austin Friars Forest School, which was financially supported by Friends of Friars, ran successfully at our new facility which opened earlier this year.

The on-site Forest School proved incredibly popular with Junior School pupils who thoroughly enjoyed learning in the outdoor space during the Summer Term.

During the holidays, a 3-day Forest School experience also welcomed new and current children into the School.

We look forward to seeing how the space evolves and grows during 2025/26!



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Pupil and Staff Feedback



"I can't wait to use the new art department facilities and know that they will benefit a lot of people. I am especially looking forward to the darkroom and greenscreen as I am interested in photography."

Alfie, 2nd Form pupil



"We are very excited to have such wonderful facilities in our art department. This will enhance the teaching and learning of our students, equipping them for their future learning while opening doors to a range of creative careers."

Katherine Quinn, Head of Art and Photography



"I am looking forward to using the new study area in the VI Form common room. It is a great addition to the space and will support a positive working environment."

Euan, U6th student



"We are absolutely thrilled to build upon our fantastic sports programme at Austin Friars, opening up new opportunities that will benefit both our pupils and the wider community."

Nicola King, Director of Sport



Conclusion

Expanding Horizons is enriching Austin Friars with vibrant creative arts, enterprising sports programs, and exciting outdoor learning opportunities.

We are incredibly grateful for the dedication and commitment of our community, which has driven our progress thus far.

However, there is more to achieve.

Your continued support will help us deliver the Food Technology Department and new Changing Rooms, two vital projects on the agenda for this academic year.

**Find out how you can support the next phase of
Expanding Horizons by contacting:**

Richard Scott (Bursar) - richardscott@austinfriars.co.uk

Chris Hattam (Headmaster) - chrishattam@austinfriars.co.uk



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Before and After Photos

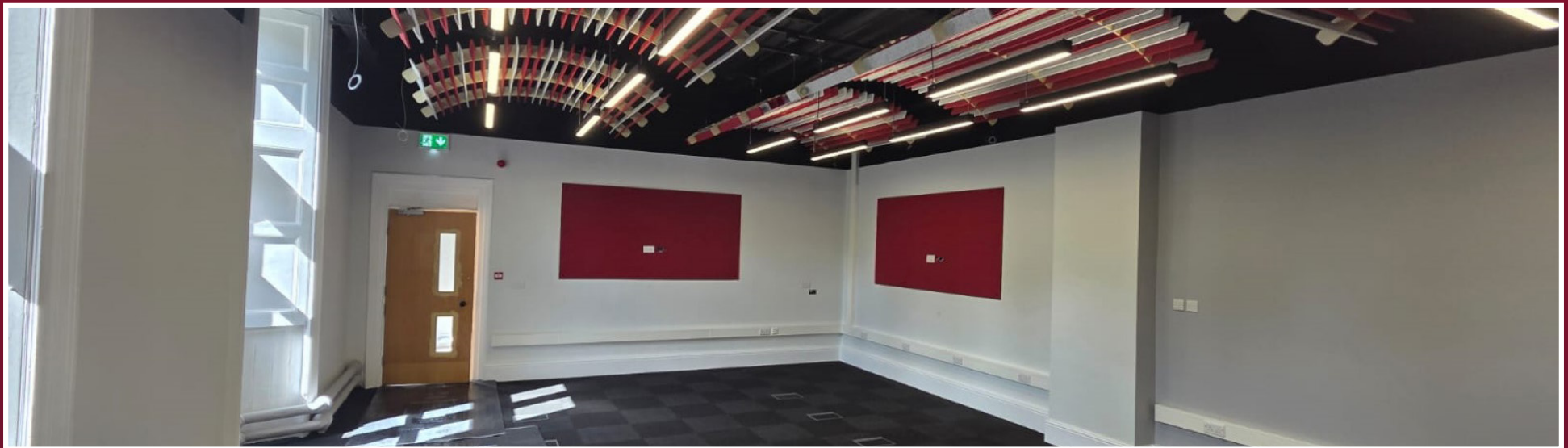
The Elizabeth Roberts Centre: Art & Design - IT Suite



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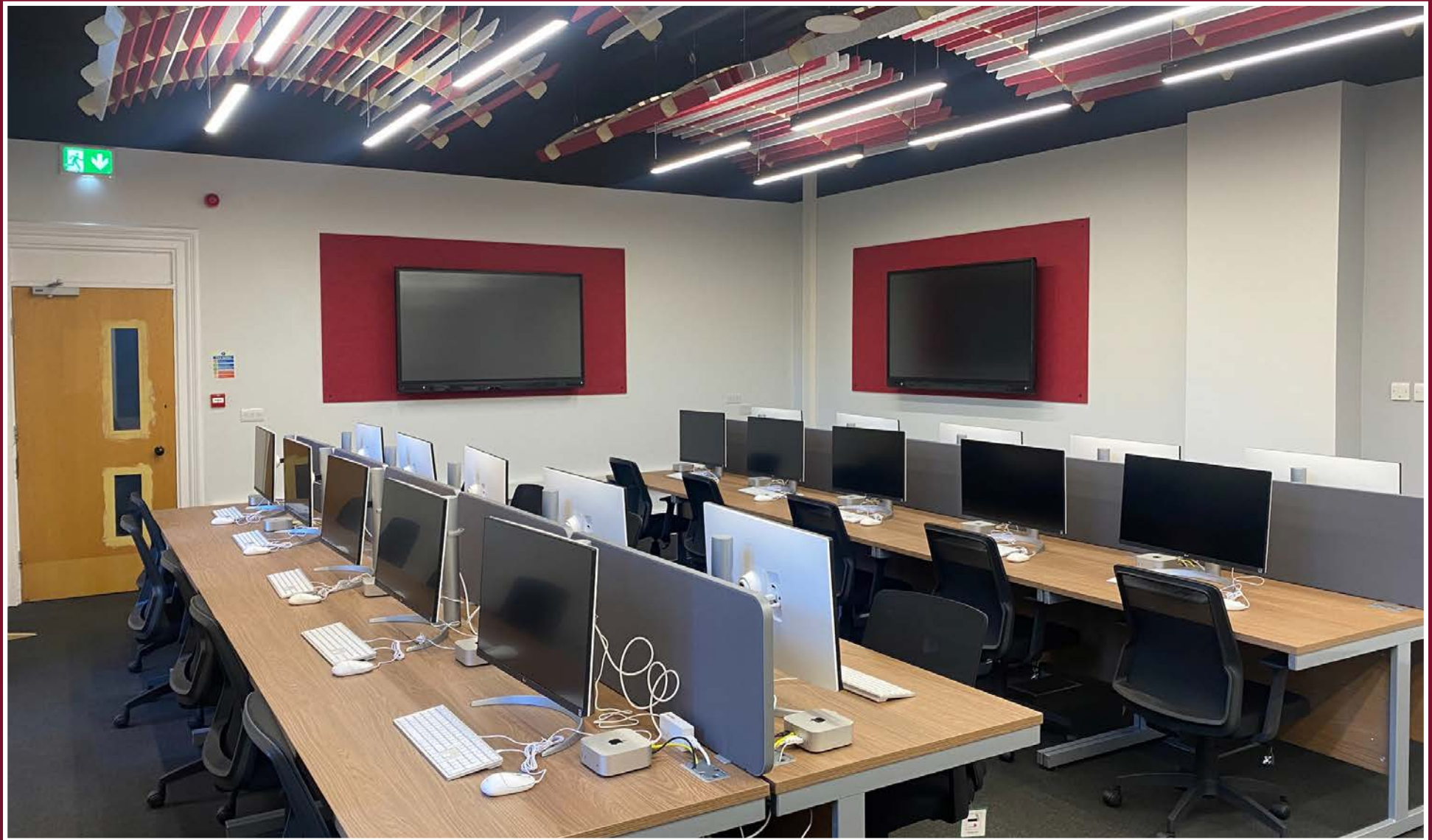
The Elizabeth Roberts Centre: Art & Design - IT Suite



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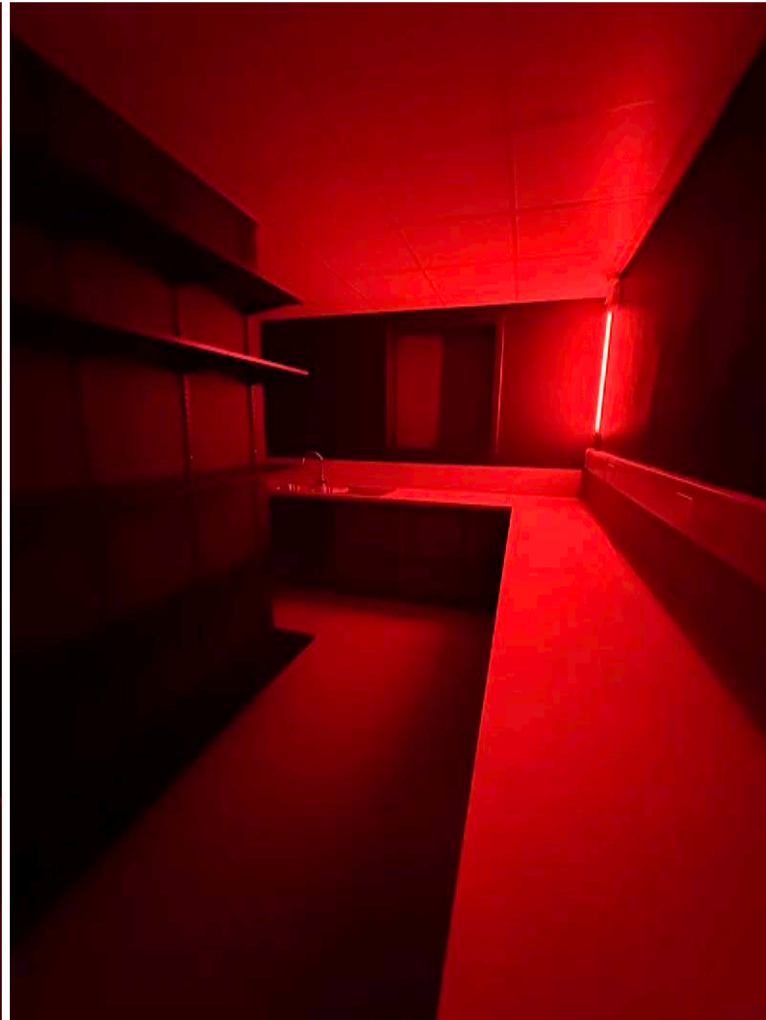
The Elizabeth Roberts Centre: Art & Design - Darkroom



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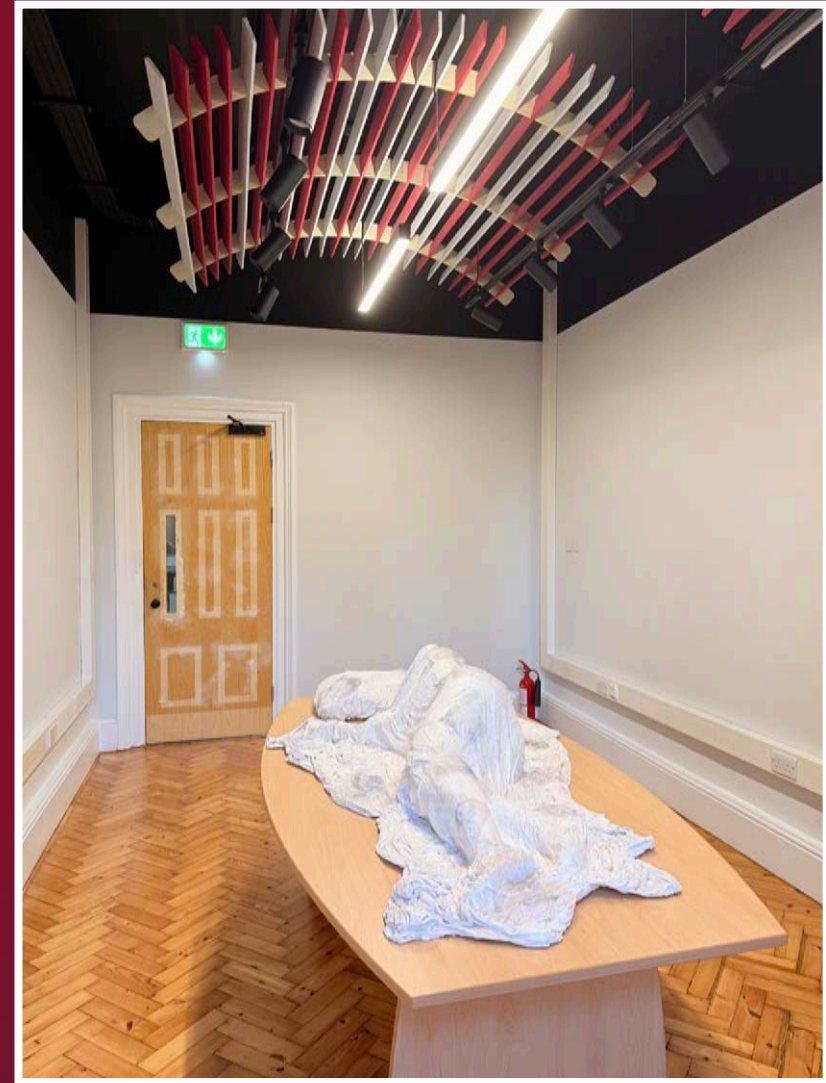
The Elizabeth Roberts Centre: Art & Design - Darkroom



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Before and After Photos

The Elizabeth Roberts Centre: Art & Design - Gallery Space and VI Form Area



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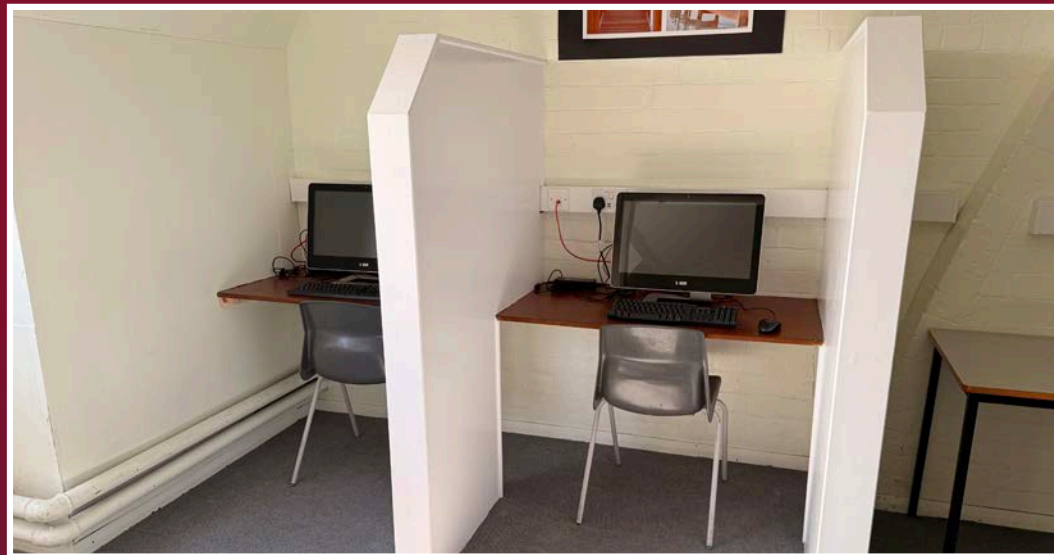
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