

Ian Williams on behalf  
of University of  
Birmingham:  
**Elms Day Nursery,  
Edgbaston**



# Project: University of Birmingham, Elms Day Nursery, Edgbaston



**Task:** External decorations and associated repairs

## Products used:

- Dulux Trade Weathershield Exterior High Gloss
- Dulux Trade Weathershield Smooth Masonry Paint
- Dulux Trade Ultimate Woodstain
- Dulux Trade Metalshield Gloss
- Cuprinol Cladding and Fence Opaque
- Repair Care Dry Flex 4

**Client:** University of Birmingham

## Background

Elms Day Nursery, based in Edgbaston, offers childcare for local parents and carers. With a vibrant indoor space and welcoming outdoor area to promote learning in the natural environment.

Despite being managed by the University of Birmingham and close to the Edgbaston Campus, the nursery is open to everyone whether they are affiliated with the University or not. This makes the centre a key feature of the local community and important that it continues to provide a first-class service in a welcoming setting.

## Project Details

Ian Williams undertook external redecorations and associated repairs at the Elms Day Nursery, which remained operational throughout the works. Works included masonry painting, painting wood stain windows, rainwater goods, boundary fencing and metal railings.

There was a quick turnaround from award of contract to starting on site as the nursery wanted the work to be completed as soon as possible. We ensured timely contract set up including bespoke site inductions and ordering of materials.

We developed a good working relationship with nursery staff and the client's surveyor and regular communication ensured that the works caused minimal disruption to the busy setting. Daily liaison with the manager meant we were able to move our operations to other elevations to avoid working around the children when they were outside. In addition, the nursery manager was extremely accommodating and often allowed the children to play in alternative outdoor areas enabling our operatives to continue working on certain parts of the building.

We were keen to limit the use of scaffolding where possible to minimise disruption and mitigate possible security issues through unauthorised access. Scaffolding was required on several elevations, for example to reach the chimney stacks, but there was no requirement for a wraparound scaffold. We were therefore able to use a combination of scaffolding and ladders on the project. We were also able to share the scaffolding with the University's masonry repair subcontractor to reduce the cost for the client and minimise the disruption to the nursery staff and customers.

Once painted, the front door needed to be left open to allow for drying time, we were therefore unable to undertake this work during operational hours due to the safety of the children. In agreement with the client, we returned on a weekend to complete this part of the project to enable full drying time when the building was unoccupied. Despite being out of hours we completed this at no extra cost to the client.





## The Challenges...

Key challenges in this project included:

- **Working in a live environment:** as the nursery remained occupied throughout the works, we had to ensure that we were not working in the vicinity of the children. Therefore, when they were playing outside we had to move to another elevation or alternatively the manager would ensure the children were playing in other outside areas, separate from operatives. We managed this through daily liaison with the nursery manager and regular progress updates. To mitigate Covid risks, site staff did not use the nursery's welfare facilities.
- **More extensive works than anticipated:** the timber repairs were more extensive than identified on the original survey. When surveyed via the scaffolding, it was apparent that some of the timber was rotten. As the repairs were beyond general repair, specialist Repair Care products were required. This was raised as a variation and resulted in the repairs taking longer than originally anticipated and more coats were also required. However, this did not cause programme delays as Ian Williams' directly employed operatives are fully trained and experienced in undertaking such repairs.
- **Subcontractor delays:** both the scaffolder and the University's masonry repair subcontractor were programmed to complete their work by the end of the first week, however they were unable to do so. This resulted in our painters having to work around them and revisit elevations later on in the programme once the masonry repairs had been undertaken and the scaffolding fully erected.

### Apprentices/ Trainees:

1 x painting and decorating Year 1 apprentice, Cameron Humphries



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