| Primary Education Appeals Form |
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| **Form reference:** FS-Case-838982387 |
| **Date submitted:** 18/05/2026 |

**Date of appeal application:** 18/05/2026

**This appeal is::** for a school place I applied for within the usual admission times - for a September start

**Name of school:** Riverhead Infants' School

**.:** Please confirm that you have been refused a place at the school you are appealing for

**First name:** ADA YILDIZ

**Last name:** ERTURK

**Gender:** Female

**Date of birth:** 2022-03-19

**Pupil ID number:** 626953

**Title:** Mr

**First name:** Asim

**Last name:** ERTURK

**Relation to child:** Parent

**Your address:**

| Postcode | Address line 1 | Address line 2 | Address line 3 | Address line 4 | Town | County |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TN14 7AE | | 30 | Old London Road | Badgers Mount | Sevenoaks | Kent |

**Home phone number:** 07501026662

**Work phone number:**

**Mobile phone number:** 07501026662

**Email address:** asim@londonist.co.uk

**Would you be happy to receive less than 10 school days notice of your appeal date being scheduled?:** Yes

**Do you require a translator or signer to be arranged?:**No

**If you have any special access requirements, please give details:**

**Your reasons for appeal::**1. INTRODUCTION

We are appealing the decision to refuse our daughter Ada a place at Riverhead Infants' School, our first preference on our primary school application. Ada has been offered a place at Otford Primary School, which was our third preference.

We have read and understood the School Admission Appeals Code and the restrictions imposed by the Infant Class Size legislation. We submit this appeal on the basis that the prejudice Ada would suffer in being refused admission substantially outweighs the prejudice the school would experience by admitting her - particularly when the wider, individual circumstances of our family are taken into account.

2. FAMILY BACKGROUND AND LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

We are one of very few families in the Sevenoaks area for whom English is not the first language spoken at home. Our primary home language is Turkish. While both parents speak fluent English and Ada is being raised bilingually, her English language development at home is necessarily limited compared to peers from monolingual English-speaking households.

The impact of this is documented in Ada's nursery records. At her Two Year Check in June 2024, Ada's keyworker recorded that she "started off very quiet" when she joined the Bumbles room, and several Birth-to-Three communication and language milestones - including understanding simple instructions, identifying familiar objects, and copying adult speech - were still recorded as "working towards" at that age. Subsequent observations through 2024 and 2025 show steady but gradual progress, with several language milestones still at "working towards" stage well into her third and fourth year. This pattern is consistent with children from non-native English-speaking households, for whom continuity of linguistic environment during the early years of formal education is particularly important.

Ada also has a seven-month-old sister, Mira, who was born in September 2025. The arrival of a new sibling has been a significant adjustment for her, and the continuity and familiarity of her early school environment is therefore especially important to her emotional stability at this stage of her development.

3. ADA'S CHARACTER AND TRANSITION NEEDS

Ada is a thoughtful, kind, and engaging child. Bryony Mealin-Holmes, Centre Director at Busy Bees Sevenoaks Riverhead Nursery, has provided a supporting letter (enclosed) in which she observes that Ada "is a bright, kind, and engaging child who has formed strong and meaningful relationships with her peers"; that she "thrives in familiar environments where she feels secure and supported"; and that "her confidence is closely linked to the presence of trusted friendships and routines."

The Centre Director writes that, in light of Ada's recent period away from her usual environment, "it is particularly important for her to transition into a school environment that she already associates with familiarity and comfort. Attending Riverhead Infant School would provide Ada with this sense of continuity, as many of her closest peers from nursery will also be attending the same setting."

She adds: "In our professional experience, children in similar circumstances benefit greatly from such continuity, especially following time away from their usual environment."

This pattern - of a child who takes time to settle, but forms genuine and lasting bonds once she does - is also visible in Ada's earlier nursery records. When she first joined Bumbles room, her keyworker wrote that she "started off very quiet" and noted that, by the time of her transition to the next room, she had "made very great bonds with the carers and her peers... which I'm sure she will take with her to buzz room."

It is precisely because Ada attaches deeply but slowly that disrupting her established peer group at the point of school entry is more consequential for her than it might be for a more outgoing child.

4. CONTINUITY WITH HER NURSERY SETTING

Ada attended Busy Bees Sevenoaks Riverhead Nursery, located immediately adjacent to Riverhead Infants' School, for approximately two years. Many of the children she formed relationships with there are progressing to Riverhead Infants' for September 2026 - a continuity that her own nursery has confirmed in writing.

Our family is currently away from Sevenoaks for a temporary period while our home at 30 Old London Road, Badgers Mount, undergoes a major renovation. We will be returning at the end of July 2026, and Ada will return to Busy Bees Sevenoaks Riverhead for the month of August, ahead of starting Reception in September. This decision was made deliberately, precisely because we recognise how important re-establishing those familiar peer connections is for a child of Ada's temperament, before she begins primary school.

The contrast between the two outcomes is therefore stark:

* At Riverhead Infants': Ada would walk into Reception alongside children she has known for two years, in a school physically adjacent to the nursery she will have just spent August at, in a setting whose surroundings, routines and faces are already familiar.

* At Otford Primary: Ada would join an entirely new peer group with no prior connections, in an unfamiliar school environment, having missed both the parent transition evening and the two taster sessions due to our temporary relocation, and while simultaneously adjusting at home to her seven-month-old sister.

For a child documented by her own nursery as one whose "confidence is closely linked to the presence of trusted friendships and routines," the difference between these two transitions is, we respectfully submit, substantial and avoidable.

5. SUITABILITY OF AN INFANT-ONLY SETTING

We also believe that a small, dedicated infant-only school environment - taking pupils from Reception through to Year 2 only - is better suited to Ada's developmental profile than a larger all-through primary school. Children who are slow to warm to new environments, and children from linguistic minority households, both tend to benefit from smaller, more contained settings where all teaching staff are specialised in the 4-7 age range; from slower, more carefully scaffolded transitions between year groups; and from communal and outdoor spaces shared only with peers of a similar age, rather than with significantly older children.

Riverhead Infants' is well known locally for its nurturing ethos and inclusive approach - qualities reflected in the school's own motto, "Nurturing Inquiring Minds" - and these are precisely the qualities Ada needs at this foundational stage.

6. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

We have engaged constructively and in good faith with the admissions process throughout. We accepted the Otford Primary place to ensure Ada had a guaranteed school for September 2026, while maintaining our position on the Riverhead Infants' waiting list. We have also been in correspondence directly with Riverhead Infants' School, who have confirmed in writing that Ada is on their waiting list for Reception 2026.

Our pursuit of this appeal is not a rejection of Otford Primary School, which we recognise as a good school. It is a request that the panel weigh, fairly and on its specific merits, whether Riverhead Infants' would be the more appropriate setting for this particular child at this particular point in her development.

7. PREJUDICE - THE BALANCE ARGUMENT

We acknowledge that Reception classes at Riverhead Infants' are subject to the Infant Class Size legislation limiting class sizes to 30 pupils. The school operates as a three-form entry school with a Published Admission Number of 90, and three Reception classes.

We respectfully submit that the marginal impact of admitting one additional child to Riverhead's well-established Reception provision is substantially outweighed by the documented prejudice to Ada of refusing her admission - prejudice supported by:

* The professional written observations of her nursery's Centre Director;
* Two years of contemporaneous nursery records demonstrating her temperament and social development;
* The specific linguistic and family circumstances set out above; and
* Her existing peer relationships within the prospective Reception cohort.

We would also respectfully ask the panel to satisfy itself that the admissions criteria have been correctly applied in Ada's case, including whether her specific circumstances - particularly the bilingual home environment and the documented continuity with the prospective Reception cohort - were properly considered at the point of allocation.

8. CONCLUSION

We are not seeking preferential treatment. We are asking the panel to weigh, fairly and compassionately:

* The real, specific, and documented prejudice Ada would experience in being refused a place at Riverhead Infants' - prejudice attested to by her own nursery's Centre Director - against
* The very limited prejudice, if any, that her admission would cause to the school and its existing pupils.

Ada is a loved, capable, gentle and engaging child, and we as her parents are doing everything within our means to give her the strongest possible start to her education. We respectfully ask the panel to allow this appeal.

**.:**

**Add a document here::** 20260429_075008.pdf, COUNCIL TAX 2026-2027.pdf, Ada_Learning_Journal_Extract.docx, RE: Waiting List - Ada Yildiz Erturk (Reception 2026).pdf, Admission to Primary school – September 2026 – Ada Erturk – ID: 626953.pdf

**confirm:** I confirm that I have read through the application and all content has been inputted correctly.