



VACANCY INFORMATION PACK

DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS DEGREE APPRENTICE

FIXED TERM FOR
DURATION OF
APPRENTICESHIP



READING BLUE COAT

INTRODUCTION

Reading Blue Coat School is a leading independent day school for students from ages 11 to 18. As at September 2023, the School has circa 800 students and has welcomed our first co-educational intake into Year 7 with the intention of being a fully co-educational independent day school from September 2027 onwards. The School has been co-educational at Sixth Form for over 30 years and this continues.

The School was founded in 1646 by Richard Aldworth, a Master of The Skinners' Company, and a Governor of Christ's Hospital. The School was established near St Mary's Minster Church in Reading and was originally known by its historic name of Aldworth's Hospital. In 1947, Reading Blue Coat School moved to the magnificent estate of Holme Park in the Berkshire village of Sonning, where it remains today.

The ethos of the School derives from its Christian foundation and traditions, fostering care and concern within the community and enabling all students to develop their full potential. The School aims to provide a stimulating and friendly atmosphere in which each student can realise his or her full intellectual, physical, and creative potential. Students are encouraged to be self-reliant and adaptable, and the School intends that they will learn the basis of good citizenship, founded on honesty, fairness and understanding of the needs of others. The curriculum provides a balanced blend of academic and co-curricular activities that combine to meet these objectives.

The School employs more than 200 salaried staff, of whom about 50% are academic. Reflecting the character of our co-educational sixth form, nearly half of our academic staff are female.

FACILITIES

Reading Blue Coat is located four miles from the centre of Reading, in the Thames-side village of Sonning. It is also three miles from Twyford, which is located on Crossrail, with fast train service across London. Set in 46 acres of land for students to enjoy, the facilities are very well maintained, and the School continues to invest in the site to add to an impressive infrastructure of buildings.

Planning permission has been obtained for a new Performing Arts Centre.



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ACADEMIC LIFE

The academic curriculum at Reading Blue Coat is based on the principle that all students should experience a broad and balanced range of basic subjects and skills. From Year 9 onwards, this range is gradually modified, by elements of choice, enabling both the interests and aptitudes of individual students to be reflected. Most lessons are taught initially in classes of mixed ability, although setting occurs in Mathematics in Year 7, in Languages in Year 8, and Science in Year 9. Geology is also a thriving subject. In Year 11, all students take qualifications in English, Maths and Science (all IGCSE) and a Modern Foreign Language. They also take three GCSEs from a broad range of eleven subjects. All students take a GCSE in Religious Studies (full course) in Year 10.

In the Sixth Form, students can choose from a range of 24 subjects, including subjects most will not have studied before, such as Economics, Politics and Psychology. Enrichment opportunities in the Sixth Form include the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), and a weekly schedule of visiting speakers. Reading Blue Coat always seeks to stretch and challenge students and the School's Learning Support Department ensures that students with specific learning needs are supported effectively. The School's Learning Research Group ensures a sustained focus on developing teachers and pedagogical enrichment.

2023 academic results were impressive; the results were amongst Blue Coat's best with 74.4% achieving A*- B at A Level, and at GCSE 78.1% gaining Grades 9 to 7.

The majority of Year 13 leavers proceed to degree courses at universities of which approximately 78% go to the Russell Group Plus universities. Each year over 75% of our students attain places at their first choice university, whilst others are successful in securing future learning opportunities in their chosen career.

PASTORAL

Pastoral care, focused on the individual, is at the heart of the School. Reading Blue Coat's pastoral structure is based around the tutorial system, within the framework of the House system. In September 2021, we increased our houses from four to six: Aldworth, Hall, Malthus, Rich, Norwood and West.

All students are part of a tutor group that is overseen by a member of staff who is responsible for their well-being and for personally overseeing the development of their character and intellectual curiosity. At the heart of the School are the values of aspiration, courage, compassion, integrity and service and all activities seek to re-enforce these. The House system enables students to take part in activities that foster the development of these ideals through a variety of opportunities that include dance, drama, music, public speaking and sport.

DRAMA, MUSIC & THE ARTS

Reading Blue Coat has a reputation for drama and musical performances of the highest quality, with an extensive programme of performances throughout the year. Students' endeavours in the arts are highly successful and widely acclaimed. Music is at the heart of the School, all students are auditioned for the choir and many learn a musical instrument. The School Musical or Play is one of the highlights of the cultural calendar and there are further opportunities to perform on stage throughout the academic year. The breadth and depth of musical and dramatic talent at the School is evident in the wide range of plays, concerts, and exhibitions that take place throughout the year.

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Further information is available on the School's website at www.rbc.org.uk

SEE ALSO THE GOOD SCHOOL GUIDE:

<https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/schools/102976/reading-blue-coat-school>

AND MUDDY STILETTOS SCHOOLS REVIEW GUIDE:

<https://berkshire.muddystilettos.co.uk/kids-2/school-reviews-kids-fashion-2/reading-blue-coats-sonning/>

SPORT

The School has a strong reputation for the high quality of its sporting teams. Sport plays a key role in developing every student's potential whilst embodying the principles of Respect, Belief, Commitment and Sportsmanship (team RBCS). Sports are coached to a very high level while providing for, and encouraging those, for whom participation rather than excellence is important.

The core sports are athletics, cricket, football, netball, hockey, rowing, and rugby. The School competes with great success at local, regional, and even national level. We have recent national competition winners in rowing and cross country running, and cricketers, netballers and rugby players who have been selected to international age group teams and gone on to play professionally. Other sports on offer include cross country, golf, tennis, swimming, and touch rugby.

ACTIVITIES

The activities programme is designed to enable students to develop practical and social skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork. Reading Blue Coat offers a number of exciting options from which students can choose for their weekly activities session, including Adventure Education, Combined Cadet Force (Army, Navy, RAF), Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Model United Nations and Enterprise Champions.

COMMUNITY

Reading Blue Coat students are encouraged to be aware of their place in the wider world and to show consideration for all those with whom they come into contact. These principles are based on the ideas handed down by Richard Aldworth who founded the School in 1646.

In recent years the School has greatly enhanced its links with the wider community under what is now called the Aldworth Partnership. One example is the Primary Schools Placement programme which gives students the opportunity to assist with tuition in English, Maths and Modern Foreign Languages in local primary schools. We also have our own community garden which produces fresh produce for a local foodbank charity and our students have recently begun a project to convert a horse trailer into a community café.

Internationally the School has a strong relationship with the charity Brass for Africa and our students support their work amongst disadvantaged children and young people in Uganda through music. As the Aldworth Partnership continues to grow, the long-term aim is that all Blue Coat students have the opportunity to be involved in transformative service projects in the local and wider community at some point in their school career.

THE IT SERVICES & SUPPORT FUNCTION

The department is responsible for the provision and operation of IT services throughout the School. This includes:

- Hardware
- Software
- Data Network – Fixed and Wireless
- Systems and Data Security
- Telecommunications – Voice and WAN
- Managed Print/Copy
- CCTV
- Presentation AV
- Teaching and Learning AV
- Digital Signage
- Budgets



Resources include:

- Servers – 2 host VMWare Server Farm
- Client Computers – 370 Endpoints including 110 laptops.
- An extensive LAN covering the 46 acre campus via a fibre backbone.
- RO2 Internet connectivity.
- A managed print/copy fleet of 50 multifunctional devices. (Ricoh)
- An IT budget of approximately £200k operating expenditure and £60k capital expenditure annually.

The school runs a Microsoft environment based on Windows Server technology and Windows 10 clients with a RM Community Connect 4 Management Layer over the top. Migrating to Intune managed Windows 11 clients over the next year.

The IT systems are modern and constantly evolving to be delivered across the campus. A comprehensive set of services are also accessible from off-campus, via a range of technologies, to enable staff and students to teach and learn at any time, from anywhere. The department presently consists of 4 full time staff working year-round:

- IT Services and Support Manager
- Network Manager
- 2nd Line Support Analyst
- MIS & Applications Apprentice

Investment in the IT infrastructure and services are ongoing and evolves as new technologies are adopted to improve the teaching, learning and operations of the School. The School works with a number of partners where additional expertise is required and can add value.

Alongside core IT services, the team are also responsible for the School's audio-visual, telecommunications, managed print/copy, CCTV and door access systems. In addition, the department is involved in the design, specification, and delivery of these services across the School's new building and renovation projects.

The School has over 370 fixed and mobile end-client devices from a variety of vendors including Lenovo, Dell. Servers are virtualised using VMware running on HP Proliant servers and augmented with a vSAN. All equipment sits on a network built using HP/Aruba ProCurve switches and Aruba Access Points interconnected with a combination of fibre optic and copper technologies.

This Apprenticeship is a position providing an opportunity to train and work to a high professional standard in IT Services and Support leading to professional qualification and a longer-term career. The School is growing pupil numbers and staff over the next 5 years as we move towards being fully co-educational in Years 7 to 11, as well as the Sixth Form. Learning innovations and techniques continue to develop quickly and require ever more sophisticated IT solutions and support.

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The Apprentice will follow a programme of study completing a BSc (Hons) in Digital and Technology Solutions (specialising in data analysis), commencing in January 2025. The course can either be studied at Cranfield University or the Open University.

All course fees are paid by the School.

You'll spend the remainder of your working week in school, learning on the job and developing your career at Reading Blue Coat.

As you develop, your role will become important to the successful running of the School, having a holistic view of the software and platforms used for Teaching and Learning, as well as the Operational Management of the organisation used by our whole community - pupils, teachers, and operational staff.

This will combine elements of Business Systems Analysis, Systems Integration and Systems Administration.

It is expected that, upon completion of the Degree Apprenticeship within approximately 48 months, and demonstration of high standards of work performance, you will take up employment with the School as a professional MIS Business Analyst.

You will be involved in the full life cycle of strategic systems from initial identification of products and systems, evaluation, deployment, and training of staff users. A significant effort is made to identify opportunities to fully exploit the software the School has invested in wherever possible, or to identify when multiple systems can be consolidated by moving to new platforms, whilst always being conscious of maximising our return on investment.



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact Barry Hines, IT Services & Support Manager, via email bjh@rbcs.org.uk



DESCRIPTION OF THE POST:

Training and working under the guidance of an experienced professional IT team, to ensure the effective operation and development of the School's technical services including network, hardware, and software. The Apprentice will work with academic colleagues to improve the impact of our IT on pupil learning experiences and teaching practices, as well as with our operational staff to improve the efficiency of our management and administrative services.

Main Tasks and Responsibilities

1. Management Information System & Data

- 1.1 Safeguard sensitive data by implementing security controls and protocols.
- 1.2 Evaluate school data to identify trends, patterns, and areas for improvement.
- 1.3 Oversee user access, permissions, and data integrity.
- 1.4 Create visual dashboards and reports to present data insights to stakeholders.
- 1.5 Query databases to interrogate data.

2. Supporting and managing

- 2.1 Record and retrieve the collection of information in the school's asset and configuration database/log.
- 2.2 Follow the maintenance schedule for all hardware.
- 2.3 Monitor the ICT Helpdesk system and work towards resolving problems and other requests in an efficient, effective, and timely manner.
- 2.4 Raise and track external support calls and escalate contract/warranty issues appropriately.

3. Develop the school's ICT service

- 3.1 Assist the IT Service and Support Manager with regard to identifying possible ICT requirements/solutions.
- 3.2 Produce estimates for planned expenditure.
- 3.3 Work as part of a team and adopt flexible working practices.

4. Personal ICT development

- 4.1 Pursue training and development to increase both personal and School technical knowledge and ability.
- 4.2 Read and maintain awareness of documents, in relation to current and future developments, that may impact upon the use of ICT within an educational setting.
- 4.3 Attend relevant meetings that may also impact on uses of ICT.

5. Operations and User Support

- 5.1 Advise and train individual staff and pupils; produce detailed help sheets and other documentation.
- 5.2 Manage routine contacts with external contractors and suppliers.
- 5.3 Assist with and conduct individual and group training on the use of ICT resources; document current policies and practice.
- 5.4 The post holder will be expected to carry out such other duties as reasonably correspond to the general character of the post and are commensurate with its level of responsibility.

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6. Installation & Maintenance

- 6.1 Maintain PCs, laptops, and other ICT related hardware to provide a system able to support staff on a day-to-day basis.
- 6.2 Support the use of all software, both administrative and curriculum specific.
- 6.3 Advise on compatibility of hardware, applications, and operating systems, according to user requirements.
- 6.4 Install and maintain the School's network; perform basic diagnostic and recovery on network equipment; configure wired and wireless devices.
- 6.5 Manage active network components; maintain Internet filtering systems.
- 6.6 Install/manage on-prem and cloud-based software; monitor system logs and diagnose issues.
- 6.7 Manage and maintain network/cloud systems & services (for example, MIS system, Server Operating Systems, Office 365, Exchange 365, SharePoint 365 etc.).

7. Other

- 7.1 The post holder is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils at the school.
- 7.2 The post holder is responsible for using technical and operational knowledge to ensure a safe environment.

Please note that this Job Description is not exhaustive, and the employee may be expected to undertake additional duties if required.



LINE MANAGER:

IT Service & Support Manager.

DEPARTMENT:

IT Support.

CONTRACT STATUS:

Fixed term for duration of apprenticeship. Dependent upon performance and completion of qualifications, will have an opportunity to take up to full time permanent employment upon completion of training.

SALARY:

Starting salary will be £19,500 per annum. Salaries are reviewed annually in September. In addition, to the September salary review, the apprentice salary will be subject to an incremental increase on successful completion of each year of the course. Annual salary is paid by bank transfer on the 25th of the month, or next working day thereafter, in 12 equal payments throughout the year.



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact Barry Hines, IT Services & Support Manager, via email bjh@rbcs.org.uk



MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEGREE APPRENTICE

The person specification focuses on the knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively. It is expected that the successful applicant will have and can demonstrate:

Knowledge and Experience	Essential	Desirable
• Interest in computers data and networks	✓	
• Competent in the use of Microsoft Office suite of applications	✓	
Skills and Attributes	Essential	Desirable
• Enthusiasm to learn	✓	
• Able to follow verbal and written instructions	✓	
• Acts politely and professionally at all times	✓	
• Hard working with attention to quality and detail	✓	
• Good team worker	✓	
• Able to work independently	✓	
• Experience of, or a desire to work with, young people	✓	
• Trustworthy, punctual, and reliable	✓	
• Physically fit and able to regularly handle/carry heavy items	✓	
• Flexible approach to work and willing to work extra hours when required (including some Saturdays on occasion)	✓	
• Ability to maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people	✓	
• Has emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours; and appropriate attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline	✓	
• Committed to the safeguarding and well-being of children and young people	✓	
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
• To be eligible for the degree programme you will need GCSE or equivalent in English, Maths and Science (at Grade 5 and above), and A Levels or equivalent that meet 96 UCAS points (at Grade C or above)	✓	
• A Level Computer Science	✓	
• A Level Maths and Further Maths		✓
• Full clean driving licence		✓

Closing date for applications: 09:00 on 6 September 2024.

Applications should be submitted by School employment Application Form, which can be downloaded from our website "Vacancies" page www.rbc.org.uk/vacancies/

This should be submitted with your letter of application, by email to: recruitment@rbc.org.uk

Contact for questions about the application process should be addressed to Mrs Inga Gregory, Head of HR, Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning-on-Thames, RG4 6SU. Email: rig@rbc.org.uk



PLACE OF WORK

Reading Blue Coat School, Sonning on Thames, Berkshire, RG4 6SU.



MEALS

Lunch and refreshments are provided free by the School.



SPORTS FACILITIES

Free membership of the School Sports Centre with access to fully equipped gym and swimming pool.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP)

Confidential independent support service available to staff when you most need it.



WORKING HOURS

Core hours of 37.5 hours per week, from 08:30 to 16:30, Monday to Friday, with 30-minute meal break. Additional hours may be required occasionally to support school events and specific projects. Some weekend working may be required for which overtime payments or time off in lieu is provided. Time granted for completion of apprenticeship studies.



PARKING

Free Car parking is available on site.



LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

25 days' paid annual leave plus 8 public holidays and some additional discretionary days over the Christmas closedown period. Holiday year runs from 1 September to 31 August annually



CYCLE SCHEME

Tax-free Cycle to Work Scheme is offered by salary sacrifice.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strong commitment to support professional development with a dedicated people development budget.



PENSION

Membership of the RBCS Group Personal Pension Scheme (employee contribution of 5% of salary and employer contribution is 8% of salary.



CAR SCHEME

Leased cars scheme offered by salary sacrifice affording large savings.



THE BLUE COAT BENEFIT HUB

Through the Blue Coat Benefit Hub you can access discounts, rewards, and perks on thousands of the brands that you love to shop with including travel; motoring; electronics; clothing; education; entertainment; restaurants; health and wellness; beauty and spa; insurance; sports and outdoors.

DISCOUNTS



Reduction in RBCS school fees for employees' children school fees offered after 6 months service:



50% reduction for all full-time staff, pro-rated for part-time staff.



Fees (from 1 September 2024) are £7,095 per term.

MEET THE STAFF

All staff, both teaching and support, form part of a qualified and experienced team, which functions at its best in being mutually supportive in a common goal: to provide the best possible education for all Blue Coat pupils.

Relationships between staff and pupils at Blue Coat are often remarked upon by visitors and parents for being warm, relaxed and mutually respectful.

Click on the link to find out more about some of our staff. Can you see yourself as part of the Blue Coat team?

www.rbc.org.uk/the-school/meet-the-staff/



GETTING HERE

BY CAR

We are located in the village of Sonning-on-Thames, just off the A4, between Reading and Twyford.

We are about 15 minutes' drive from Junction 10 of the M4 motorway. From there, take the Reading / Bracknell turnoff at Junction 10 on to the A329M to Reading. At the roundabout by the flyover take the third exit (A4) towards Maidenhead. Follow the dual carriageway over the next roundabout and up the hill. Over the railway bridge, turn left into Sonning Lane. The School is about ½ mile on the left.

BY BUS

The School and village of Sonning is served by local bus services 128 and 129 (operated by Courtney) from Reading to Wokingham.

Also by service 850 (operated by Arriva Bus) from High Wycombe, Marlow, Henley, Twyford to Reading. Alight at the junction of Sonning Lane and Bath Road, from where it is a short walk.

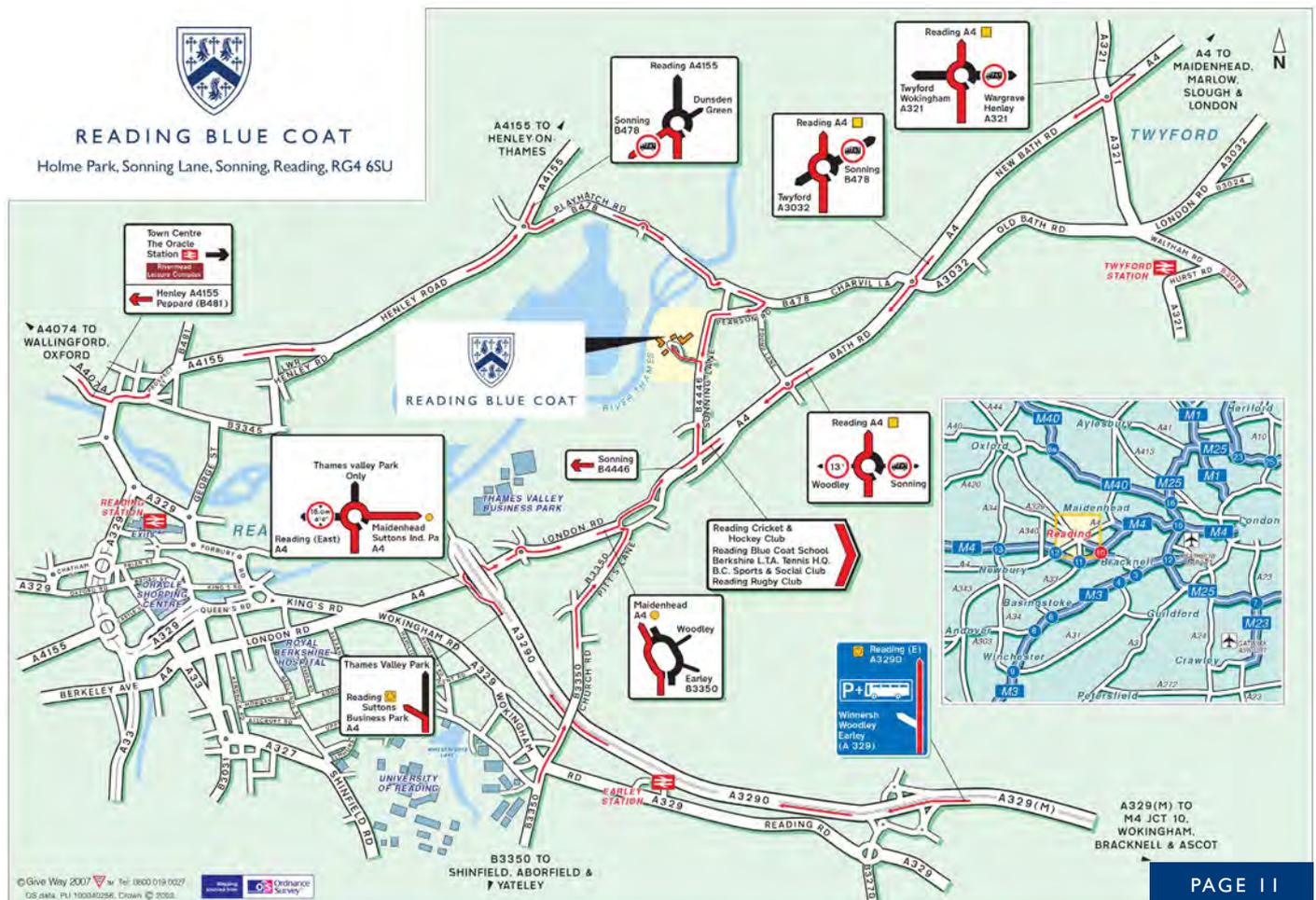
BY TRAIN

Our nearest rail links are at Reading central station (mainline to London, Wales and the West), which is about 5 miles from the School (about 15 minutes by taxi).

We are also served by local stations at Twyford, which is about 3 miles away (about 10 minutes by taxi), and at Earley, which is about 4 miles away (about 15 minutes by taxi).



For information, call Reception: **0118 944 1005**



ONE READING BLUE COAT

our community



Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning-on-Thames, Berkshire RG4 6SU

Tel: 0118 944 1005 rbc.org.uk