



# VACANCY INFORMATION PACK

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## SCIENCE TECHNICIAN (BIOLOGY)

PERMANENT,  
PART TIME,  
TERM TIME ONLY



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 will continue to be co-educational between the ages of 16 and 18.

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](http://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.

## BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Science departments at Reading Blue Coat are thriving and successful ones. Each year, they attract large numbers of A Level students.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught separately for Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Classes generally consist of 20 students, and are of mixed ability. They receive 2 periods a week, of 35 minutes duration for each science, and the lessons are timetabled as doubles.

Pupils in Year 9 study the Edexcel IGCSE Biology syllabus, and are taught entirely by Biology specialists. At the end of Year 9, pupils are split into Double or Triple Science classes following their end-of-year examinations. The top sets work towards the Triple Science certification, and those in the lower sets sit the Double Award certification. The Biology department is highly successful at GCSE level, with an average of 80% of pupils achieving grades 9 and 8.

Our A level students follow the OCR Biology A course. We achieve considerable success at A level, with many candidates achieving places on medical or veterinary courses as well as preparing a number of successful candidates for Oxbridge entry over the last few years. In the summer of 2024, 67% of A-level pupils achieved A\*-B.

As part of A level Biology, students are taken on a residential course run by the FSC in one of their centres in the South West. Biology Staff accompany them on this trip, and the centre staff work alongside Blue Coat biologists in the teaching of Practical Skills, working towards the certification of the Common Practical Assessment Criteria. We encourage our students to enter the Biology Olympiad and Biology Challenge competitions (organised by the Society of Biology) to broaden their interest and knowledge in biological topics outside their exam curriculum, and they regularly achieve Silver and occasionally Gold awards.

All Biology staff are expected to assist in the running of clinics for pupils requiring additional help (at a time convenient for the teacher) and assist in the running of Biology Discussion sessions for A level pupils (Oxbridge-style lunchtime tutorials where pupils are encouraged to discuss a recent article of interest or participate in debates on controversial issues such as the use of stem cells).

The Biology Department currently has three full-time members of staff and three part time members, all of whom assist in different areas of the co-curricular life of the school. The Department enjoys the care of two excellent technicians who ensure that the Department is well resourced and are also keen to support new investigations. There are four fully equipped Biology laboratories, which we seek to make pleasant and stimulating environments in which our pupils can learn.

The laboratories are on the ground floor of a two storey Science Centre. This contains 11 laboratories in all. A greenhouse attached to one side of the building serves as an additional resource for experimental work and materials in the Biology Department along with access to a local nature reserve for teaching outside the laboratory.

The Department is involved with the school's highly successful Extended Project Qualification, where pupils are encouraged to carry out practical investigations and write them up as a scientific paper.

All students, whether studying IGCSE or A level, are assessed regularly, so that their progress can be monitored and assistance given when required. Our Biology staff are dedicated to providing the best possible education for those in our care, so that they find the subject fascinating, stimulating, and, above all, enjoyable.

We consider ourselves to have been successful, not only if our students gain good grades in their examinations, but also if they have developed an interest in Biology that leaves them 'thirsty for more' for the rest of their lives. The department encourages professional development, with staff expected to develop their skills via INSET and through sharing good practice within the school.



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact **Dr Jennifer Yabsley**, Head of Biology, on **0118 944 1005** or email [jhy@rbcs.org.uk](mailto:jhy@rbcs.org.uk)



**LINE MANAGER:**

Head of Biology and Head of Science Coordination

**DEPARTMENT:**

Science.

**CONTRACT STATUS:**

Permanent part-time, term time only contract to commence in January 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter. The first 6 months of service is served as a probationary period.

**SALARY:**

Salary will be in the range of £15,830 to £17,774 per annum pro rata (FTE £25,097 to £28,178) depending on experience and qualifications. 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.

**PURPOSE OF THE JOB:**

Duties will be predominantly in the Biology department but may also entail supporting the other sciences. They will include the preparation and setting out of apparatus and specimens for day-to-day teaching and for examination practicals.

**Duties:**

- Preparation of practicals for class teaching.
- Building and/or maintaining apparatus.
- Preparation of practicals for internal and external examinations.
- The specialist clearing of laboratories, cleaning and storing of apparatus, including organising prep-room.
- Cataloguing and maintenance of apparatus.
- Covering textbooks and recording the issue and return of text books to pupils.
- Maintaining of the stock of materials and apparatus, advising when purchases are necessary to replenish stock.
- Purchasing of items from suppliers using the iFinance purchase order system and maintaining a record on the system for budgeting purposes. Order and maintain resources as directed, including stationery.
- Assist with the management of the departmental budget under the guidance of the Head of Department.
- Assist with the upkeep of notice boards and displays in the department.
- Assist in keeping the classrooms, office and stores in an orderly fashion.
- Help to keep Schemes of Work up to date.
- Maintain organised folders with copies of all practical instructions.
- Help with the administration and organisation of Open Days and public events for the department, including arranging any equipment for visiting speakers and ordering refreshments for events.
- Attend Open Days to promote the department (usually 2 Saturday mornings each year).
- Be available to accompany trips if these fall on the designated day and hours of work.
- To act professionally and with good conduct at all times.
- To undertake such other duties, as detailed by your line manager, that may from time to time be required to ensure the smooth running of the school.

*NB: This job description and allocation of responsibilities is not exhaustive and may, with consultation, be amended from time to time.*



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact **Dr Jennifer Yabsley**, Head of Biology, on **0118 944 1005** or email [jhy@rbcs.org.uk](mailto:jhy@rbcs.org.uk)

## SCIENCE TECHNICIAN (BIOLOGY)

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
• A good knowledge of basic biology.	✓	
• A good understanding of the Health and Safety issues pertaining to working in a laboratory environment.	✓	
• Previous experience of working in a scientific environment.	✓	
• Previous experience of working as a science technician.		✓
• Successful experience of managing and organising own work.		✓
• Experience of working in an education setting.		✓
Skills and Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
• A keen interest in science, particularly biology.	✓	
• Enthusiastic, adaptable and energetic.	✓	
• High standards of achievement and professionalism.	✓	
• Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing.	✓	
• Good organisational and planning skills including prioritising tasks, working to deadlines, and working with a high degree of personal efficiency.	✓	
• Have good attention to detail.	✓	
• Shows initiative.	✓	
• Thinks creatively to anticipate and solve problems.	✓	
• Staying calm and cheerful when working under pressure.	✓	
• Confident in offering support and guidance to staff and students.	✓	
• Be able to work effectively as part of a team.	✓	
• Be able to work unsupervised.	✓	
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
• Educated to at least 'A' level or BTEC Level 3 in Biology.	✓	

### Closing date for applications: 09:00 on Thursday 2 January 2025.

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

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

Part-time, from 10:00 to 16:30, Monday to Friday, (30 hours per week) with a 30-minute unpaid meal break, term time only. Additional hours will be required for the delivery of co-curricular activities; school events; open evenings; parents' evenings; etc.



### PARKING

Free Car parking is available on site.



### LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

School holidays in accordance with the published School calendar.



### 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 January 2025) are £7,980 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/](http://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.

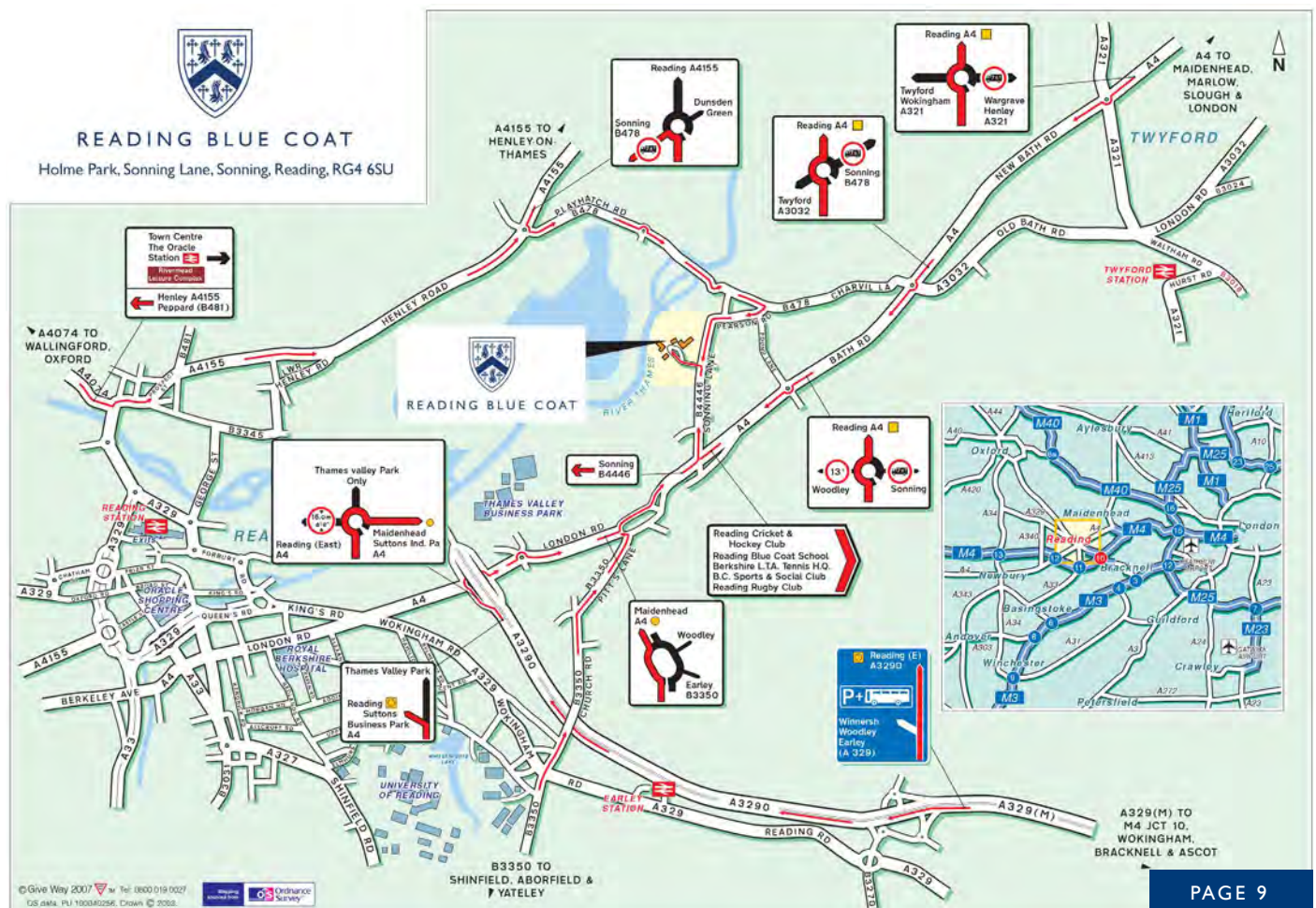
### BY TRAIN

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](http://rbc.org.uk)