

VACANCY INFORMATION PACK

SENIOR DEPUTY HEAD

READING BLUE COAT

Dear Prospective Senior Deputy!

Thank you for taking the time to look through this pack and give careful consideration to whether you might wish to join the Reading Blue Coat community. I hope that you find in these pages a sense of what makes our school such a special place to work.

This is an excellent moment to join Reading Blue Coat. The successful candidate will be a leader at the heart of a school that is thriving academically, pastorally and culturally, but which is also entering a significant and exciting new phase of development. The appointment comes as Reading Blue Coat completes its transition to full co-education, opens a major new Performing Arts Centre and builds upon the strong foundations laid over recent years. The role therefore offers both continuity and possibility.

The Senior Deputy Head is a trusted partner in leadership. This is a demanding and influential position, carrying responsibility not only for the day-to-day quality of school life, but also for helping to shape the School's future direction. It is a role that requires strategic judgement, operational excellence and a genuine enjoyment of working with young people and colleagues.

Independent schools are changing. Parents increasingly seek value, confidence and authenticity in the education we provide. Educational expectations continue to evolve. Schools must remain ambitious while also retaining a clear sense of who they are. In this context, the Senior Deputy Head plays a pivotal role. The successful candidate will help ensure that the quality of every pupil's experience matches the ambition of our vision.

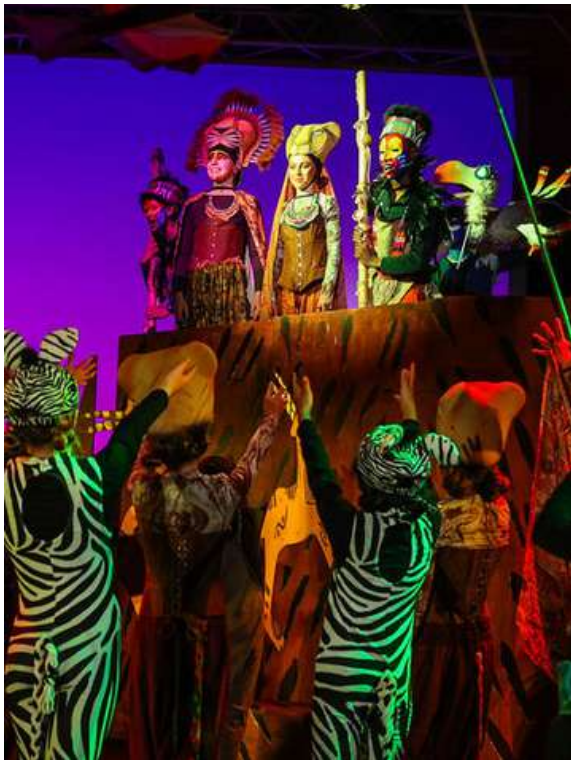
We are therefore seeking an outstanding educational leader: someone who combines intellectual credibility with emotional intelligence; someone who can hold high standards while nurturing strong relationships; someone equally comfortable discussing strategy with Governors, educational innovation with colleagues, pastoral issues with families and opportunities with pupils.

Reading Blue Coat is a school with a distinctive spirit. Visitors often remark upon the warmth of the community, the strength of relationships and the sense that pupils genuinely enjoy being here. Our riverside setting, educational philosophy and commitment to developing the whole person create a special environment in which young people flourish.

Rooted in our Christian foundation, the values of aspiration, compassion, courage, integrity and service shape every aspect of school life, and the Senior Deputy Head will have a particular responsibility for ensuring that this ethos continues to be lived with authenticity across the community for many years to come. If you share our commitment to working hard, caring deeply and making a meaningful difference, I encourage you to explore this opportunity further. I would be delighted to meet you soon.

Pete Thomas
Headmaster





INTRODUCTION

Reading Blue Coat School occupies a distinctive place within the independent school sector. Situated on a beautiful riverside campus in Sonning, the School educates approximately 890 pupils aged 11 to 18 and combines academic ambition with a strong commitment to character, service, creativity, inclusion and personal development. The School has grown significantly in recent years while remaining faithful to the values and relationships that underpin its success. The completion of the move to full co-education represents another important milestone in that journey.

The School's educational philosophy is rooted in the belief that young people flourish when expectations are high, opportunities are abundant and individuals are known and valued. Academic achievement matters, but so too do confidence, kindness, resilience, leadership and intellectual curiosity.

Reading Blue Coat seeks to develop young people who are not simply successful in examinations, but who are equipped to contribute thoughtfully and positively to the world beyond school.

THE SCHOOL

Founded more than three centuries ago, Reading Blue Coat combines deep roots with a distinctly forward-looking outlook. The School's exceptional 46-acre riverside setting contributes significantly to its identity, providing pupils with space to learn, develop and thrive within an environment that is both beautiful and purposeful.

The School is ambitious across every dimension of school life.

Its academic programme is characterised by intellectual challenge, excellent teaching and a commitment to helping pupils fulfil their potential. Equally important is the breadth of co-curricular opportunity available to pupils. Sport, music, drama, adventure education, leadership opportunities and community engagement are not regarded as optional extras but as central elements of a Blue Coat education.

The new Performing Arts Centre signals the School's confidence in its future and reflects a broader ambition to create outstanding facilities which enhance pupils' educational experience.

Visitors to the School frequently comment on the quality of relationships. Pupils are engaged and articulate. Staff are deeply committed to their work. Parents value the combination of academic excellence, strong pastoral support and opportunities for personal growth that the School provides.





ETHOS AND VALUES

Reading Blue Coat is a community shaped by aspiration, compassion, courage, integrity and service. The School believes that education should develop the whole person. Academic achievement, while important, is seen as one aspect of a broader educational experience designed to prepare young people for meaningful and successful lives.

Relationships lie at the heart of this philosophy. Pupils should feel known, valued and challenged. Staff should feel trusted, supported and empowered. Families should feel welcomed as partners in their children's education.

The School seeks to cultivate intellectual confidence alongside humility, resilience alongside compassion and independence alongside responsibility. This balance is one of Reading Blue Coat's defining strengths and one which the next Senior Deputy Head will be expected to protect and strengthen.

WHY THIS ROLE MATTERS

This appointment has unusual significance.

Recent research into contemporary school leadership suggests that the most successful schools increasingly distinguish between the strategic, external-facing responsibilities of the Head and the operational, educational and cultural leadership undertaken by the Senior Deputy Head. The latter has become one of the most influential leadership positions within independent education.

At Reading Blue Coat, the Senior Deputy Head will lead the day-today life of the School. The role encompasses educational quality, the staff experience, operational effectiveness, pastoral oversight, safeguarding, compliance, staffing and much of the rhythm of school life. The successful candidate will have both substantial responsibility and considerable influence.

For an ambitious school leader, this represents an exceptional opportunity.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The successful candidate will join the School at a moment of genuine opportunity. Several significant developments will shape the next phase of Reading Blue Coat's story:

- Completion of full co-education across the School.
- The opening and integration of the new Performing Arts Centre.
- Continued strengthening of academic, co-curricular and pastoral provision though the implementation of a new structure to the School day from September 2027.
- Maintaining excellent value and affordability in a changing independent school landscape.
- Sustaining admissions momentum and community confidence.
- Continuing to widen access through Foundation Awards.
- Supporting the ongoing development of staff and leadership capability.

The School is not seeking radical disruption, rather, it seeks a thoughtful, confident and strategically minded leader who can build upon significant existing strengths while helping the School adapt successfully to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

This is an ideal role for someone who enjoys complexity: someone who understands that outstanding schools are built not simply through vision, but through culture, relationships, operational discipline and attention to detail.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Senior Deputy Head reports directly to the Head, forms the Executive Team with the Head and Bursar, and also serves as a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The role combines strategic and operational leadership and involves close engagement with Governors, senior colleagues, staff, pupils and parents. The successful candidate will become the Head's principal deputy.

The position offers exceptional preparation for future headship. It provides substantial responsibility across educational, pastoral, operational and organisational leadership while allowing the successful candidate to work alongside an experienced Head and leadership team.







The role: Senior Deputy Head

Contract Status: Permanent contract to commence in September 2027. The first four months of service is served as a probationary period.

Salary: Competitive and commensurate with the responsibilities of the role. 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.

Place of Work: Reading Blue Coat, Sonning on Thames, Berkshire.

The Senior Deputy Head will help lead every aspect of school life and ensure that the School's educational vision is translated into consistently excellent practice.

The Senior Deputy Head will:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Support the development and delivery of the School's strategic vision.
- Lead significant aspects of school improvement and organisational development.
- Contribute to long-term planning and strategic decision-making.
- Help ensure that the School remains innovative, ambitious and distinctive.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Promote excellence in teaching and learning.
- Ensure high academic standards and expectations.
- Support curriculum development and educational innovation.
- Champion the educational experience of every pupil.

OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Oversee the effective day-to-day running of the School.
- Ensure the School remains compliant with the Independent School Standards and Regulations.
- Lead staffing, operational planning and organisational effectiveness.
- Ensure consistency of systems, communication and implementation.
- Drive continuous improvement in operational performance.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

- Protect and strengthen the School's pastoral culture.
- Ensure that pupils are known, supported and challenged.
- Support safeguarding and welfare provision.
- Ensure pastoral structures evolve effectively alongside the completion of co-education.
- Oversee the Foundationers support

PEOPLE LEADERSHIP

- Lead, motivate and develop staff.
- Build leadership capacity across the School.
- Recruit, retain and develop excellent colleagues.
- Foster a culture of trust, accountability and professional growth.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- Be visible and approachable throughout the School.
- Build strong relationships with pupils, staff and parents.
- Represent the School with warmth, authenticity and credibility.
- Act as a persuasive ambassador for Reading Blue Coat's educational vision.

SENIOR DEPUTY HEAD

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:

Candidates will be able to demonstrate:	Essential	Desirable
Significant senior leadership experience within a successful secondary school.	x	
A commitment to values-based leadership.	x	
Credibility across academic, pastoral, co-curricular and operational leadership.	x	
The ability to deputise fully for the Head.	x	
Experience of leading teams and developing leaders.	x	
A proven ability to improve standards and outcomes	x	
Strong organisational and operational leadership skills.	x	
Excellent communication and relationship-building abilities.	x	
Emotional intelligence, judgement and resilience.	x	
Experience with the ISI inspection framework.	x	
The ability to lead change thoughtfully and effectively.	x	
Strong understanding of safeguarding and pupil welfare.	x	
Commercial awareness and understanding of the current educational landscape.	x	
The ability to work effectively with parents and external stakeholders.	x	
A clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and the skills required to help lead an inclusive school.	x	
A commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils at the School.	x	
Experience within the independent sector.		x

Candidates will be able to demonstrate:	Essential	Desirable
Experience of co-educational schools.		x
Pastoral experience.		x
Experience of major organisational change.		x
Experience of staff restructuring or organisational development.		x
Experience of admissions, marketing or external engagement.		x
Responsibility for significant operational functions.		x

PERSONAL QUALITIES

The successful candidate is likely to demonstrate:

- Warmth and humanity.
- Intellectual curiosity.
- Strategic judgement.
- Calm authority.
- Optimism and positivity.
- Resilience under pressure.
- Humility.
- Integrity.
- Strong listening skills.
- Courage and decisiveness.
- A sense of humour.
- A genuine enjoyment of working with young people.

The job description and allocation of responsibilities is not exhaustive and may, with consultation, be amended from time to time.





LIFE IN SONNING

Reading Blue Coat enjoys one of the most attractive settings in independent education. Located in the Thames-side village of Sonning, the School offers the benefits of a beautiful rural environment while remaining exceptionally well connected to Reading, London and the wider South East.

The result is a setting that contributes significantly to the School's culture: spacious, welcoming and calm, yet connected to a dynamic and outward-looking region.

REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

The Head intends to offer a highly competitive remuneration package reflecting:

- the significance of the role
- the scale of responsibility
- the experience and calibre of the successful candidate

Further information regarding salary, pension arrangements and benefits will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates should submit:

- A completed application form.
- A covering letter addressed to the Head.

The covering letter should explain:

- Why this role appeals to them now.
- What the candidate would bring to Reading Blue Coat.
- How their experience aligns with the opportunities and responsibilities outlined in this brochure.

The selection process is expected to include preliminary interviews, school visits, stakeholder engagement, assessment exercises and final interviews.

Applications should be submitted by email to Applications@RSAcademics.com



SAFEGUARDING

Reading Blue Coat School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff are expected to share this commitment.

The successful applicant will be required to undergo appropriate safeguarding screening, including references, identity checks and an Enhanced DBS check.

The School is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from individuals from all backgrounds.

ABOUT RSACADEMICS

RSAcademics is one of the leading providers of leadership search and advisory services to schools in the UK and internationally. Founded in 2001, RSAcademics supports schools, groups, foundations and educational organisations through executive search, governance, strategy, leadership development, market research and organisational improvement.

RSAcademics exists solely to serve schools because it believes that thriving schools are essential to a thriving society.

Useful links:
Reading Blue Coat
Reading Blue Coat School - Routine Inspections 2024
Reading Blue Coat School Review | The Good Schools Guide

Closing date for applications: **12:00 noon on Monday 9 November 2026**

First round interviews: **during w/c 23 November 2026**
Second round interviews: **during w/c 7 December 2026**

For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact Richard Backhouse or Camilla Oulton at RSAcademics.

Richard Backhouse: richardbackhouse@rsacademics.com
Camilla Oulton: camillaoulton@rsacademics.com







PLACE OF WORK

Reading Blue Coat School, Sonning on Thames, Berkshire.



MEALS

Lunch and break time refreshments are provided free of charge by the School.



SPORTS FACILITIES

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



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

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



WORKING HOURS

Full time, Monday to Friday, with 60-minute meal break. 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. Some work will be required during School holidays as appropriate to the responsibilities of the role.



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 APTIS Personal Pension Scheme (employee minimum contribution of 5% of salary and employer contribution is 22% of salary). Life Assurance at 4x gross salary and Income Protection cover.



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.



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



50% reduction for all full time staff, pro-rated for part time staff. Fees (from 1 September 2026) are £8,700 per term (inclusive of VAT).



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.

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?

https://rbcs.org.uk/about/leadership-team-governors/



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.

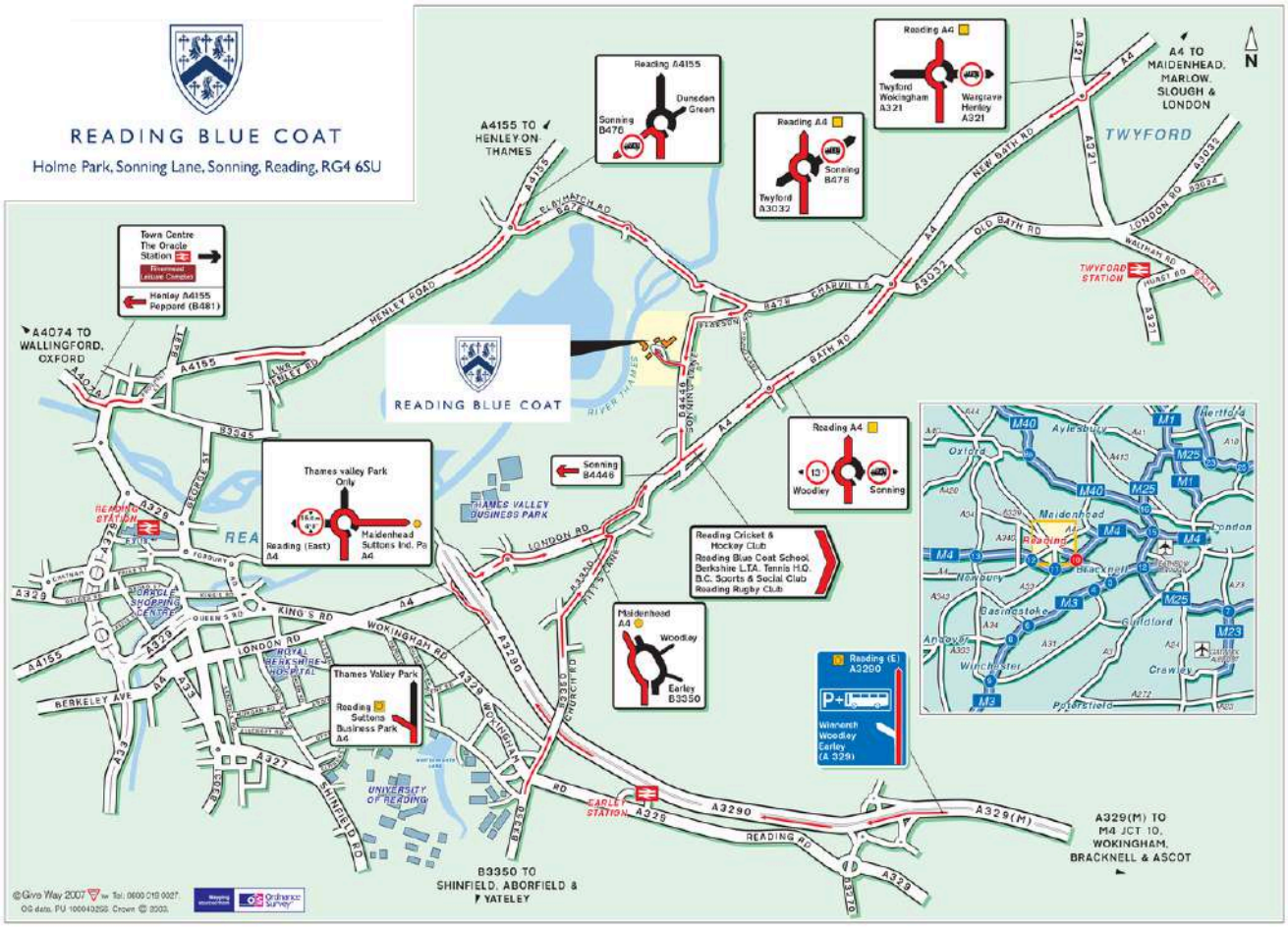
Also by service 850 (operated by Arriva Bus) from High Wycombe, Marlow, Henley, Twyford to Reading. Alight at the junction of Sonning Lane and Bath Road, from where it is a short walk.

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

READING BLUE COAT

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