

Title: UTC Reading

Author: Department for Education (DfE)

Approved in October 2011, opened in September 2013

Impact Assessment – Section 9 Academies Act Duty

1. Section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 places a duty upon the Secretary of State to take into account what the impact of establishing the UTC Reading would likely be on maintained schools, Academies, FE Colleges and alternative provision in the area in which the Academy is proposed to be situated. The assessment shows that while the UTC Reading could have a moderate impact on two schools and potentially a high impact on one local secondary school, any negative impact on individual schools and colleges is likely to be balanced by the positive impact that UTC Reading will have on parental choice, in addressing the demand for high quality technical provision in the Thames Valley region and thus increasing competition to help drive up standards.

Background

2. The UTC Reading is a 14-19, non-faith co-educational school sponsored by Oxford & Cherwell Valley College. It will admit up to 600 students aged 14 to 19 living in the Thames Valley region once at full capacity in 2016, initially opening in September 2013 with 60 in Year 10 and 80 in Year 12. It aims to be the “leading UK Technical Academy” specialising in computer science and engineering, taught alongside a traditional curriculum. It aspires to lead the way in establishing computer science as a mainstream school subject with a variety of progression routes into employment and higher level study. UTC Reading’s vision is to ensure its students gain the reputation for demonstrating the skills, attitudes, knowledge and experience sought by the world’s leading employers. It is supported by high profile academic and industry partners, primarily the University of Reading, and Microsoft, Cisco, Peter Brett Associates, BT, RIM and Network Rail. These partners will help to ensure that UTC Reading’s curriculum is innovative and relevant for high-tech industries. They will contribute resources and professionals from within their organisations and will work directly with students on projects and placements, giving them access to the latest industry practices. The UTC will open in refurbished buildings in the former Reading College Campus in Crescent Road, Reading.

3. The lead sponsor, Oxford & Cherwell Valley College, has long standing experience of working in partnership with employers, training providers and HE institutions in delivering academic and vocational education across its campuses to learners of all abilities and age groups. The College’s most recent Ofsted inspection in February 2010 recognised its strengths in establishing effective long term local and regional employer partnerships in Thames Valley and the sponsor will apply this experience to deliver an academically rigorous technical curriculum that meets local and regional needs.

4. The Department has purchased the freehold of part of the University of West London’s campus on Crescent Road and the UTC Reading will be the owner of the freehold. Reading Borough Council will be holding the design and build contract with the Kier Group on behalf of the RTA Trust.

Catchment Area, its Characteristics and Admissions

5. The UTC is a regional facility and its 15 mile catchment area will cover a wide area of Berkshire, including Reading, Wokingham, West Berkshire, South Oxfordshire, Basingstoke & Deane, Bracknell Forest, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wycombe and Hart. Three grouped post code areas have been defined as the method to ensure a good geographical spread and applicants living close to the UTC Reading, or with siblings at the academy, will not have priority over other applicants within the other areas. A set percentage of places will be allocated for children resident in three grouped post code areas.

A map showing these three post code areas is below:



Area 1: RG1, RG2, RG4, RG5, RG6 and RG30

Area 2: RG7, RG8, RG9, RG10, RG12, RG27, RG31, RG40, RG41, RG42, RG45, GU46 and GU47

Area 3: RG14, RG18, RG19, RG21, RG22, RG23, RG24, RG26, SL1, SL2, SL4, SL5, SL6, SL7, GU14, GU15, GU17, GU18, GU19, GU20 and GU51

6. The UTC's admissions policy is fully compliant with the School Admissions Code criteria and admission to the school will be non-selective. Where fewer applications than the published admission number for the relevant year are received the UTC's Admissions Authority will offer places to all those who have applied, although Year 12 applicants will have to meet the minimum entry criteria. When UTC Reading is oversubscribed, after the admission of pupils with Special Educational Needs where the school is named in the Statement, priority will be given to those children who meet the following criteria:

a) Looked after children; or a child who was previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to an adoption order, residence, or special guardianship order.

b) Remaining places will be allocated as follows: a. 30% of places allocated to applicants within Area 1 which will include all postcodes in RG1, RG2, RG4, RG5, RG6 and RG30

c) 30% of places allocated to applicants within Area 2 which will include all postcodes in RG7, RG8, RG9, RG10, RG12, RG27, RG31, RG40, RG41, RG42, RG45, GU46 and GU47

d) 30% of places allocated to applicants within Area 3 which will include all postcodes in RG14, RG18, RG19, RG21, RG22, RG23, RG24, RG26, SL1, SL2, SL4, SL5, SL6, SL7, GU14, GU15, GU17, GU18, GU19, GU20 and GU51

e) Remaining 10% of places will be allocated to pupils living outside the areas listed in b to d above with those living closest to the front gates of the UTC Reading (straight line distance, using GPS technology) being admitted.

7. The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. If the UTC is unable to agree a place for all applicants meeting a specific criterion, random selection will be used as a tie-breaker.

8. The UTC will operate a waiting list for all oversubscribed year groups and organised in the order of priority of the Academy's admissions oversubscription criteria. Waiting lists will not be based on the date the application was added to the list and names will be maintained on the list until 31st December 2013.

9. There are thirteen LAs which fall within the fifteen mile radius from the Academy. However this assessment concentrates on those schools and FE institutions within a ten mile radius of the UTC. There is currently a surplus of 6.5% of secondary places across the three LA districts the Academy will primarily serve - Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire. Reading and West Berkshire Districts both have declining surplus places whilst the neighbouring district Wokingham is at near full capacity and projected to see an increase in its secondary pupil population of 12.4% over the next few years.

Table 1: Need for secondary places in the LA districts that the UTC proposes to primarily serve

Table 1a: Need for school places at district level and in the local area				
Basic need statistics	Reading	Wokingham	West Berkshire	Local area (schools within a ten mile radius)
Total school capacity	7,549	10,278	13,157	17,694
% of surplus places	11.7%	0.4%	8.3%	7.8%
% increase in number of secondary places needed by 2015/16 (basic need)	None	9%	None	
Secondary pupil population increase between 2011/12 and 2017/18	5.5%	12.4%	1.3%	
Summary: Neighbouring district Wokingham is at near full capacity, and is projected to see an increase in the secondary population of 12.4% over the next few years. This could lead to a higher demand for places in Reading (where the UTC is located).				

Source: LA Level data from the School Census SCAP 2011, School Level Census Jan 2011, DSD

10. Reading Local Authority itself is home to 154,200 people of which nearly a quarter, 35,000 are under 19 (23.15% of the population). The increasing child birth rates, inward migration and increases in housing stock are boosting demand for primary and secondary places in Reading and the neighbouring boroughs of Wokingham and West Berkshire. Population projections to 2020 estimate that the under 20 population in Berkshire West will increase more than in the South East or nationally, with an estimated 5% increase in Reading, 4% in West Berkshire and 3% in Wokingham. Reading and Wokingham Local Authorities current projections predict a shortfall of secondary school places of around 600 by 2016. This projection is without taking into account the planned house building schemes to the south of Reading and in Wokingham and Arborfield and presents real challenges in finding suitable school sites to expand, or new sites to develop in order to diversify educational provision to parents and young people.

Local Authority View

11. 13 LAs within the 15 mile catchment area of UTC Reading were invited on 2 April to provide their views on the academy proposal as part of the statutory section 10 consultation. Of these, only two, Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council responded, the latter generally supportive of the proposal for technical education provision. The home LA, Reading, stated it was unable to support the proposal as the evident local demand was for an 11-16 school. However, the LA overall has not been obstructive to the development of the academy and the relationship between the Academy Trust and LA is a cordial one.

Consultation

12. No direct representations have been received by the Department but a six week public consultation has been carried out by the Academy Trust. As part of their consultation, UTC Reading sent over 20,000 copies of their consultation brochure to key stakeholders within the 15 mile catchment area, which included: 13 LAs; secondary schools; colleges; local community groups; youth groups; faith groups; professional associations and local residents.

The brochure issued contained a tear-off slip to submit comments. An email (with

links to the website, consultation brochure and online questionnaire) was issued to over 550 stakeholders requesting their feedback together with a UTC website set up outlining the proposal. No responses were received from schools or colleges. The consultation closed on 11 May 2012 and its findings showed a mixed response to the establishment of a 14-19 Technical Academy. In the six week period, 58 online questionnaires were completed and 6 written responses were received with the majority of respondents in favour of the UTC proposal being progressed. 55% of respondents (i.e. 35) favoured the proposed academy and 45% of respondents (i.e. 29) were opposed.

13. The proposed specialisms of computer science and engineering were welcomed in the context of ensuring that young people are employable and flexible for an uncertain future. The majority were in favour of the vision and ethos of the UTC Reading, in particular the link to industry with key business sponsors who aim to keep the curriculum and areas of study relevant over the years. The question as to whether the UTC would broaden choice for local 14-19 students was not supported. The key issues raised, led by Reading Borough Council, were the expected shortfall (by 2016) of 11–19 school places within Reading, and that the proposed site for the UTC would take the last available plot of land for an 11-19 school. Comments on all questions generally referred back to the lack of 11-19 school provision in the area. With regards to the admissions arrangements, some respondents felt that a larger allocation should be given to the grouped post codes within the Reading area.

14. Taking into account the projected shortage of secondary places in the coming years, and the relatively small size of UTC Reading, its establishment is likely to have a positive impact in improving parental choice by widening the number and type of places available in local secondary state provision, and by driving up standards in surrounding schools. There is also a strong local connection with employers in the region and the technical educational offer complements the economy of Reading. Both of these features are key aims of UTC policy and we would expect the UTC to drive up standards in schools across the board, improving standards for all young people in the area.

Impact on schools

15. We have considered the impact the UTC may have on all secondary schools and FE providers within the six LAs that fall within the UTC's core 10 mile catchment area. We have excluded selective schools from our assessment as the UTC will not impact on these.

Impact on Primary Schools, Special Schools and Alternative Providers

16. The UTC Reading will be a school admitting pupils in the 14 to 19 age range offering a curriculum focussing on technical studies alongside core academic subjects. Students will study for national qualifications in the specialisms of computer science and engineering.

17. This is substantially different from the provision offered by Alternative providers and special schools and we therefore expect the potential impact on these providers to be minimal. We also expect Primary Schools to be relatively unaffected because there is no overlap in age group between a primary school (5-11 year olds) and the UTC (14-19 year olds).

18. Although the UTC will work to accommodate the needs of pupils where the school is named in their statement of SEN, it will have no specialist SEN provision. Additionally, whilst the UTC will ensure its ethos, policies and curriculum meets the needs of pupils of all abilities, it will have no alternative specialist provision for pupils with highly challenging emotional and behavioural difficulties. As such, the UTC is unlikely to have any impact on special schools and other alternative provision and these schools have also been excluded from our assessment.

Impact on secondary schools

19. The closest fifteen secondary schools within the 10 mile radius from the UTC are listed in Table 2 below. There are fifteen schools from a five mile radius of the proposed UTC. Eight schools were above the national average for KS4 attainment in 2011, while seven schools were below, with three schools performing particularly poorly – John Madejski Academy, Blessed Hugh Farringdon and Prospect School.

20. Two thirds of the schools are rated as either good (four) or outstanding (six) by Ofsted. One school, John Madejski Academy, has been placed in special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Table 2: Schools within the local area

School name	Ofsted judgement	% 5A*-C incl Eng and Maths 2009	% 5A*-C incl Eng and Maths 2010	% 5A*-C incl Eng and Maths 2011	Distance from UTC site (miles)
Reading School	Outstanding	100%	100%	100%	0.61
Maiden Erlegh School	Outstanding	74%	75%	74%	0.98
Kendrick School	Outstanding	99%	100%	100%	1.06
The Bulmershe School	Satisfactory	45%	49%	53%	1.09
Reading Girls' School	Good	37%	45%	54%	1.22
John Madejski Academy	Inadequate	18%	28%	31%	1.84
Waingels College	Good	67%	71%	67%	2.51
Blessed Hugh Farringdon Catholic School	Satisfactory	34%	34%	43%	2.75
Highdown School and Sixth Form	Outstanding	61%	52%	55%	2.81
Forest School	Good	73%	62%	61%	2.95
Prospect School	Good	36%	43%	40%	3.36
The Piggott School	Outstanding	72%	73%	74%	4.21
The Emmbrook School	Satisfactory	54%	59%	66%	4.24
The Holt School	Outstanding	78%	78%	81%	4.76
Chiltern Edge Community School	Satisfactory	56%	67%	57%	5.06
LA av. for Reading		53%	55%	56%	
National av.		51%	55%	58%	

Schools where the impact is minimal

21. Below is a discussion of the likely impact on the fifteen nearest secondary

schools to the proposed UTC site. The table shows that opening the UTC Reading will have a minimal impact on 10 schools.

Table 3a: Schools within the local area					
School name	Ofsted	School capacity	Proportion of surplus places	% 5A*-C incl Eng & Maths 2011	Impact Rating
Reading School	Outstanding	887	-0.3%	100%	Minimal
Maiden Erlegh School	Outstanding	1,788	-0.4%	74%	Minimal
Kendrick School	Outstanding	790	10.4%	100%	Minimal
Waingels College	Good	1,331	-5.2%	67%	Minimal
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School	Satisfactory	779	-8.7%	43%	Minimal
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre	Outstanding	1,440	6.8%	55%	Minimal
Forest School	Good	1,166	3.3%	61%	Minimal
The Piggott School	Outstanding	1,091	-12.4%	74%	Minimal
The Emmbrook School	Satisfactory	1,219	-2.4%	66%	Minimal
The Holt School	Outstanding	1,209	-2.7%	81%	Minimal

Schools where the impact has been assessed as moderate and high

22. The table 3b below summarises the impact of the UTC on four schools as moderate and one as high.

Table 3b: Schools within the local area					
School name	Ofsted	School capacity	Proportion of surplus places	% 5A*-C incl Eng & Maths 2011	Impact Rating
The Bulmershe School	Satisfactory	1,383	22.3%	53%	High
Reading Girls' School	Good	947	30.2%	54%	Moderate
John Madejski Academy	Inadequate	1,100	12.9%	31%	Moderate
Prospect School	Good	1,606	24.7%	40%	Moderate
Chiltern Edge Community School	Satisfactory	958	39.7%	57%	Moderate

Schools where the impact is moderate

23. The impact of the UTC on the four schools has been assessed as moderate, based on the fact that they all offer different curricular which is distinct from the UTC; have been recognised by Ofsted as either good or improving schools; and the projected number of surplus places in the area is projected to reduce and demand is predicted to increase. The average distance that pupils in Reading travel to attend a secondary school is 2.4 miles and each secondary school is evaluated in turn and the likely impact on each is then assessed.

a. Reading Girls' School

Reading Girls' School is a foundation school with a sixth form of below average

size with capacity for 947 pupils, although only 653 on roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost two thirds of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and approximately two thirds of students speak English as an additional language. It is rated as Good by Ofsted and 54% of pupils achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2011, up from 45% in 2010. Compared to the national average, a slightly lower proportion of pupils in this school made the expected level of progress in English and Maths in 2010. This school is the second closest school to the UTC and currently has many surplus places, although is improving in terms of performance. Given that it is a single sex school with foundation status which works in partnership with the local girls' grammar school, this should help it attract female students seeking a solely academic curriculum. Therefore the impact of the UTC on the school has been assessed as moderate.

b. John Madejski Academy

The John Madejski Academy is a sponsored average-sized secondary school with capacity for 1100 pupils and currently has 966 on roll. The very large majority of students have been in the academy since it opened and there are significantly more boys than girls and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. About one quarter of students are from a minority ethnic group, mainly of mixed, Black or Black British backgrounds. It received an inadequate Ofsted judgement in January 2012 and only 31% of pupils achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2011 up from 28% in 2010. This school is 1.84 miles away from the UTC and would therefore be expected to lose more pupils than those school located further away within catchment LAs. However, it managed to fill all of its year seven places and has a small number of surplus places. In reference to the challenging pupil profile intake of the John Madejski Academy, we do not expect the UTC will attract students from this school, given the technical aptitude and academic focus of its curriculum. Therefore the impact of the UTC on the school has been assessed as moderate.

c. Prospect School

Prospect School is an undersubscribed academy converter which opened in September 2011 with capacity for 1762 pupils although has 1164 on roll. Prior to conversion the school's Ofsted inspection of January 2010 judged the overall effectiveness of the school to be good with sustained capacity to improve further. 48% of students achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths in 2011 up from 43% in 2010. The proportion of students with special needs and disabilities is higher than the national average and the school has a resource base called "The Bridge" to cater for up to 30 pupils with SEN. It has specialist status in sport and ICT and its sixth form offers a range of vocational qualifications and pathways. This school has been recognised by Ofsted as an improving one and filled almost all its year 7 places in 2011 so the loss of a few pupils should not affect the financial viability of the school. The school sixth form provision focuses on a vocational offer which does not place it in direct competition with the UTC Reading. Therefore the impact of the UTC on the school has been assessed as moderate.

d. Chiltern Edge Community School

Chiltern Edge Community School is an 11-16 smaller-than-average secondary school situated in sub rural Oxfordshire. It draws many of its students from Reading and has capacity for 1100 pupils although currently has 574 on roll. The school is a specialist language college and it also offers many of its facilities for

community use. It shares its site and its reception with the secondary section of a local special school and a Sure Start Centre. 57% of students achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths and has been judged as a Satisfactory school with good capacity for improvement. Given the school's specialism, capacity and capability to drive improvement and wider characteristics, we do not expect the UTC to have a negative effect on the financial viability of the school nor a significant impact on the loss of pupils. Therefore the impact has been assessed as moderate.

Schools with a high impact rating

a. The Bulmershe School

The impact of the UTC on The Bulmershe School, a secondary school located just over a mile away has been assessed as high. The school has attainment below the national level and only a satisfactory Ofsted rating, putting it at a higher risk of losing pupils to an attractive new provider. The school also has a large number of surplus places, and failed to fill around a third of its Year 7 places in 2010/11, so any further loss of pupils may exacerbate the existing surplus places issue with the school and have a negative effect on the long term viability of the school. However, we expect the risks to the school to be mitigated by the positive response submitted by The Bulmershe School as part of the Section 10 consultation and its offer to work in partnership with the UTC once it is established.

Impact on sixth form colleges and FE colleges

24. There are three colleges within the ten mile radius of the UTC, each with distinctive curriculums. A summary of the key features of each is provided in Table 4 below

Table 4: Colleges within the local area							
College name	Ofsted judgement	Average points score per student at level 3, 2009	Average points score per student at level 3, 2010	Average points score per student at level 3, 2011	Proportion of learners aged 16-18	Distance from RTA site (miles)	Impact Rating
The Henley College (sixth form college)	Good	745.7	766.1	765.1	90%	6.3	Minimal
Berkshire College of Agriculture	Good	671.9	671.7	673.0	Around 60%	8.3	Minimal
Bracknell and Wokingham College	Satisfactory	654.9	600.3	636.2	45%	8.7	Minimal
LA av. for Reading		854.2	851.5	878.1			
National av.		721.1	726.5	728.2			

25. The Henley College and Berkshire College of Agriculture offer bespoke subject specialisms to complement the ethos of their institution such as business

and agriculture and therefore we assess the impact of the opening of the UTC on these institutions as minimal, particularly as they are high performing institutions with a solid reputation and healthy pupil enrolment. The Bracknell and Wokingham College is a medium sized general further education college and its core business is vocational education aimed at lower ability pupils. The College offers provision in all subject areas with the largest numbers of enrolments in preparation for life and work, health, public services and care, and engineering. In 2010/11, there were 1,112 full-time learners of whom about 90% were aged 16 to 18. Approximately 3,000 learners are enrolled on adult and community learning courses and a further 300 as apprentices on work-based learning programmes. In addition, it provides adult and community learning courses in a significant number of community outreach centres. Therefore we assess that any potential loss of pupils to the UTC will be mitigated by the size of the College and its capacity to absorb the loss of pupils, the breadth of FE courses it offers to a diverse community of learners, both young and adult.

Conclusion

26. In conclusion, our assessment is that there could be a potential high impact on one local secondary school. However, we do not believe that the long-term future viability of any school is likely to be threatened due to the projected rise in the 11-18 cohort of pupils, the need in future for a greater number of state-funded secondary school places in the neighbouring LA, Wokingham, and the distinctive technical education offered by the UTC Reading. In addition, it is anticipated the UTC will have positive impact on increasing potential choice and driving up standards through adding quality competition in the area. The impact on three local FE institutions is expected to be minimal given the different and distinctive curriculums each offer to young people. The UTC Reading will therefore enrich the post-16 provision further through its technically focused curriculum.

27. We therefore are of the view that it is reasonable for the Secretary of State to enter into the FA with UTC Reading despite the potentially negative impact this might have on certain underperforming schools in the short term.