



## Your Child, Your School, Your Voice

### Heads Up!

#### Parenting on Purpose: Are you doing too much for your child?

Dear Parents and Carers

This week's thorny issue stems from an article I read online by Amy Carney, a woman who has stopped doing several things for her teenagers, in order to encourage them to be more independent. It's an interesting issue; we would of course, do anything for our children, but perhaps as they get older it is time for us to step back and allow them to take control of some of the simpler things? Easier said than done. The article suggests that we should stop doing several things:

##### 1. Waking your child up in the morning

This is a tricky one for me; I feel as if I need to be in control of this aspect of our lives, but the reality is that I am teaching my children to be utterly reliant on me for something they could completely control themselves. I am working on this one, as Carney comments, 'our goal is to raise well-functioning adults here.' Good point, well made.

##### 2. Making their breakfast and packed lunch

When my children were younger I would spend hours filling packed lunch boxes with a balanced lunch that would be appealing and ensure my children were not hungry, but also deemed healthy enough by school and affordable with 3 of the ever-growing angels. As teenagers they are utterly capable of creating lunch themselves, I know what is in the house, they are welcome to it; good enough for me, I've given that up – and as for breakfast – it's been years!

##### 3. Filling out their paperwork

Are you a school bag rummager, wearily pulling out creased permission letters from the detritus of backpacks, only to find them stuck with left over lunch and leaked ink? I am that woman. Even though we have a largely electronic system, I still search out the slip and complete it. But, if my children want to attend the trip or activity, will they make this happen? Most likely. Perhaps this is a risk I could try and take? Watch this space.

##### 4. Delivering forgotten items to school

Not an option in The Brinkley house – we are already here, but we do often have parents arriving with PE kit, cooking ingredients and homework; what if you didn't? Would it make you cruel? Or would your child learn from the consequence issued by the school and pack their bag better next time? I suspect the latter; be brave, which links to the next:

##### 5. Making their failure to plan become your emergency

When your child hasn't remembered something and calls you in emergency – how do you react? What if you simply stated, 'Well you will have to serve the detention, see you this evening, have a good day.' I think we can help here by reinforcing the need for packing bags the night before.

##### 6. Doing all of their laundry

I don't suppose this is realistic, in our house the washing gets done; do I pick it off floors rather than waiting for it to reach the laundry basket? Occasionally, even though I hate myself for it! The reality is that if you don't wash the favourite item once – it miraculously makes its way to the basket next time and as Carney reiterates, 'Every once in a while a child needs a healthy reminder that I do not work for them.'

## 7. Emailing and calling teachers or coaches

I found Carney's view of this interesting; she states, 'There is no way we, as parents, are going to question a coach or email a teacher about something that should be between authority figure and our child.' What she suggests is that the child should learn to discuss with the adult and ask for our help at a certain point. This is perhaps counter-intuitive; we want to protect our children, but there is an important point here, that children need to be able to conduct themselves respectfully and listen to the authority figure. This relationship is key as we go through life and one that needs to be modelled by parents – no one wants their child to be the one who is not able to accept criticism or advice from the adults they work with.

## 8. Medalling in their academic learning

Carney's final point is about homework; don't do it for your children. This seems fairly straight forward, but also, I think there is a balance to be struck here. The product of good homework is better progress over time. Homework should test or consolidate learning, but it does need doing. Our role here is to ensure there is a quiet space, some designated part of the home and then an interest in school overall.

I am not sure I am ready to do all of these things but I do agree that there is a time for us to step back and ensure our children begin to manage themselves and their responsibilities. Having just dropped my eldest at university last month, I am not worried about him washing, cooking and looking after himself – I know he can do all that. My worry is about him meeting deadlines and getting to lectures – I fear I may have 'over parented' a little here. What we want from our students at John Mason is bags packed ready for learning – with all equipment, including pens and pencils; deadlines met and children who have the growing ability to make the right decision for themselves. So, if some of this has struck a chord with you, set yourself a secret goal and see how your child responds; they might just surprise you.

That's all from me, have a good week.

**Sarah Brinkley**

Follow me on Twitter: @HeadteacherJMS

# Focus On Teaching and Learning in History

For many students studying history can be daunting because of the levels of literacy needed; historians love to read and reading around the course is an integral part of both the GCSE and A-level. However it is good practice to start reading history early; so one of our earliest year 7 projects is the book review.

But reading should be a pleasure, not a daunting task and we are encouraging our students to really get into their historical reading in a few key ways:

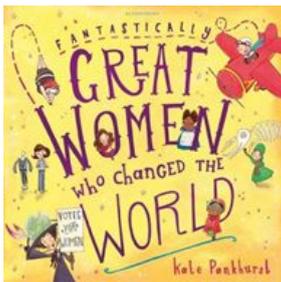
- 1) **Do enjoy your book** – life is too short and there are far too many great books about history to waste time on boring ones. If a book doesn't 'grab' you then look for a better one. Different people respond to different types of book which is why we have a wide selection both in the history department and the LRC.
- 2) **Don't overlook fiction** – there is some brilliantly written historical fiction available; well researched and with a strong sense of period. One of the key questions in our AS induction is the extent to which historical fiction counts as 'history' – an issue debated by many historians. Whilst many of the details may be imagined, for contextual understanding fiction can be a great way into a new topic.
- 3) **Don't turn it into a task** – there are plenty of activities which involve taking notes, making detailed timelines or in-depth analysis of the text. However one of the things we try to show our students is that this is not always necessary; reading widely can be much better than reading in depth for some types of understanding. So our A-level students might read 4-5 chapters by different authors for a topic, rather than picking one and taking pages of notes from it. In so doing they will see how historians have approached the topic in different ways and build a strong narrative of the events through regular exposure.
- 4) **Do discuss your reading** – share your reactions with a friend or family member (or history teacher!). Tell them about what you found and why you found it interesting. They may recommend your next great read.
- 5) **Do make requests** – both the history department and the LRC have a budget for books and we are very keen to encourage students to engage with history through reading. Do make suggestions and requests so that we can get a greater range of books in to interest you and future students.

One final thought of note, though, is that the purpose of all this reading, as well as pleasure, is to build historical understanding. And books are not the only way to do this. We have available a range of short articles for all ages. There are also excellent documentaries and podcasts which can support students with their studies in history. So below, as well as some book recommendations, please find some recommended podcasts, in case they are of more interest or act as a good hook into your next historical topic.

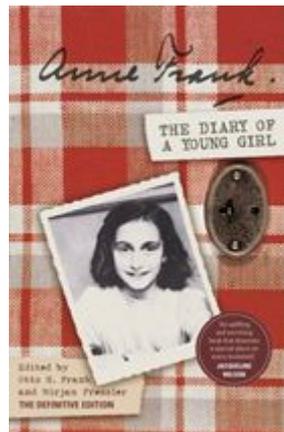
**Some recommended reads for younger readers:**



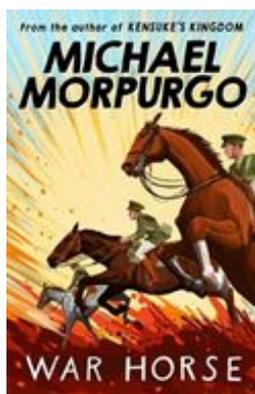
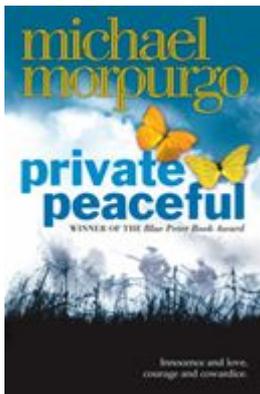
The Horrible Histories series, now further popularised on the BBC are a great introduction to any topic. Although somewhat gruesome and focusing on the unusual, they are well researched and engaging and make a great read. Good Christmas presents if you want to collect the whole set!



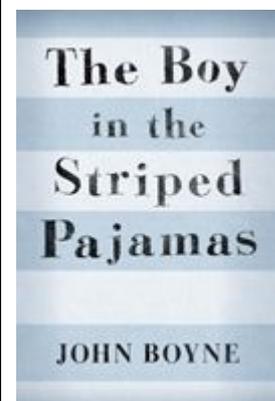
We are introducing far more lessons on the history of women at the suggestion of last year's year 8 students. In preparing these, we came across this great book by Kate Pankhurst. Well worth a read!



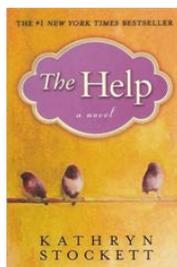
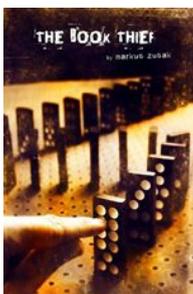
A challenging but worthwhile read, that is a favourite of many of our students and which provides a great insight into a terrible period of history about which all our students should learn.



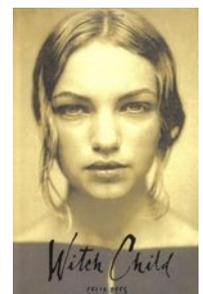
Michael Morpurgo's fiction is well researched and accessible. Popular with students of all ages, it is a great way into our first major topic of year 8. For those who develop a taste for historical fiction our next topic is World War 2 so why not try John Boyne?

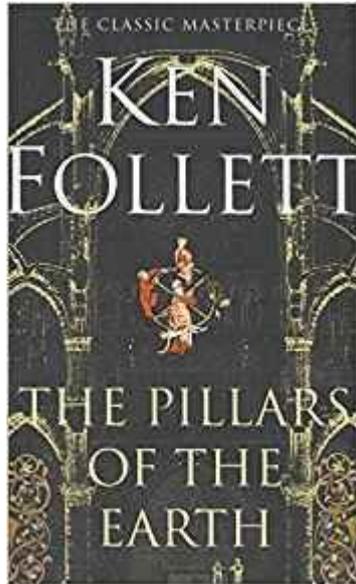


**Great reads for older students:**

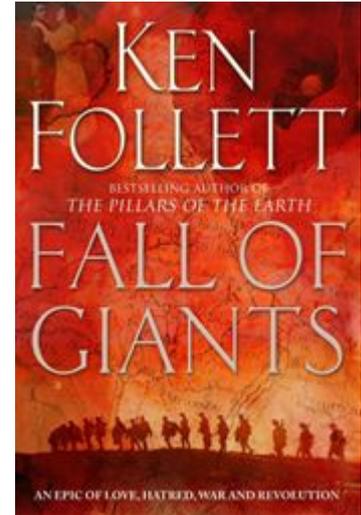


Interested in fiction? Each of these books deals with injustice and prejudice in different periods of history and each fits well with aspects of our GCSE and A-level courses. Great reads for difficult topics.

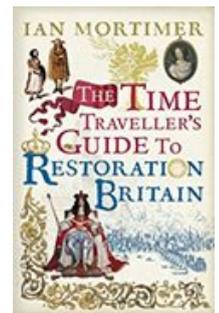
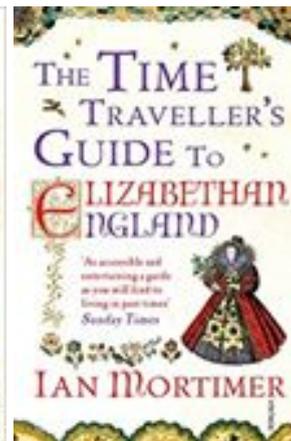
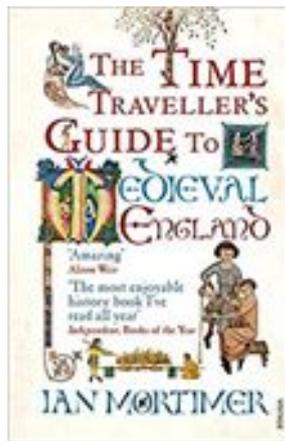




Follett's books are my personal favourites. Well-researched, gripping and yet realistic they provide a great insight into the periods he has written about. They are long (very long) but repay the effort to read them. His twentieth century trilogy is brilliant and fits well with our A-level unit on Britain. The Kingsbridge series offer a great insight into life in Britain throughout the middle ages – a significant part of our GCSE course.



Mortimer's guides to different periods of English history are quite detailed, and so can be a challenging read but they are so well researched and so full of fascinating examples and individual case studies they make a great read. Good reads for our GCSE students with brilliant chapters on 'Crime and Punishment' for each period! The premise is also interesting so makes for a gripping read.



Imagine you are a time traveller and find yourself in this period. What would you need to know? What would you notice? What would be different? What rules would you have to follow? A great series to really put yourself into the historical setting.

And for those who would prefer something in a different format, here are some useful historical podcasts, that might also support your understanding and develop your interests:

11 <sup>th</sup> C	Domesday Book <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b040llvb">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b040llvb</a> Battle of Stamford Bridge <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011jvlt">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011jvlt</a> The Schism <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054921">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054921</a>
12 <sup>th</sup> C	Eleanor of Aquitaine <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06yfhqk">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06yfhqk</a> Hildegard <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b047c312">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b047c312</a> Third Crusade <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547ls">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547ls</a>
13 <sup>th</sup> C	Magna Carta <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00k4fg7">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00k4fg7</a> Robin Hood <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005492h">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005492h</a>
14 <sup>th</sup> C	Black Death <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bcqt8">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bcqt8</a> Peasants' Revolt <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0038x8s">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0038x8s</a> Chivalry <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03tt7kn">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03tt7kn</a> Battle of Bannockburn <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00y2srx">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00y2srx</a>

15 <sup>th</sup> C	Margery Kemp <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07cyfkg">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07cyfkg</a> Agincourt <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y25q">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y25q</a> Spanish Inquisition <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003c1bw">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003c1bw</a> Wars of the Roses <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546sp">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546sp</a>
16 <sup>th</sup> C	Diet of Worms <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0038x8z">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0038x8z</a> Mary, Queen of Scots <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b088fs7z">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b088fs7z</a> Spanish Armada <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00v1qyb">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00v1qyb</a> Dissolution of the Monasteries <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b009jqt1">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b009jqt1</a> St Bartholomew's Day Massacre <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005493t">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005493t</a> Aztecs <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548v0">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548v0</a> Tudor State <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546xd">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546xd</a>
17 <sup>th</sup> C	Mughal Empire <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y27h">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y27h</a> Salem Witch Trials <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06pxp2z">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06pxp2z</a> Trial of Charles I <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kpd6">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00kpd6</a> Great Fire of London <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00ft63q">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00ft63q</a> Glorious Revolution <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547fk">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547fk</a> Restoration of the Monarchy <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547bx">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547bx</a>
18 <sup>th</sup> C	Catherine the Great <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003hycx">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003hycx</a> George Washington and the American Revolution <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y28v">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y28v</a> French Revolution's Reign of Terror <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9cf">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9cf</a> Sikh Empire <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b075t5mn">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b075t5mn</a> Frederick the Great <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b060bctg">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b060bctg</a> Wealth of Nations <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b052ln55">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b052ln55</a> Jacobite Rebellion <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548y0">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548y0</a> Enlightenment in Scotland <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548ln">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548ln</a> Enlightenment in Britain <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005479m">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p005479m</a> Slavery and Empire <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548jd">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548jd</a> Legacy of the French Revolution <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547gq">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547gq</a>
19 <sup>th</sup> C	Bismarck <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00775pm">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00775pm</a> Simon Bolivar <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00f4prq">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00f4prq</a> 1848: Year of Revolution <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019qy9p">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019qy9p</a> Garibaldi <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b083qx9j">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b083qx9j</a> Peterloo Massacre <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9l7">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9l7</a> Gettysburg Address <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07c2w5j">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07c2w5j</a> Brunel <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04nvbp1">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04nvbp1</a> Consequences of the Industrial Revolution <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wr9r7">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wr9r7</a> Great Reform Act <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00flwh9">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00flwh9</a> Charge of the Light Brigade <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008md8x">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008md8x</a> Dreyfus Affair <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00n1l95">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00n1l95</a> American West <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548gg">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548gg</a> British Empire <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547kp">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547kp</a> Napoleon and Wellington <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547jy">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547jy</a>

20 <sup>th</sup> C	<p>Suffragism <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jigg8">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00jigg8</a></p> <p>Alexander II's Assassination <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9b2">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9b2</a></p> <p>Marie Curie <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05n1dmt">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05n1dmt</a></p> <p>Spanish Civil War <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548wn">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548wn</a></p> <p>Hitler in History <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546wh">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546wh</a></p> <p>Lenin <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546pv">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546pv</a></p> <p>Atrocity in the 20th Century <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054638">http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054638</a></p>
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Enjoy!  
Mr R Conway, Head of Humanities

## New STEM Competition

Design a new logo for 'John Mason School STEM'. This logo will be used to promote all STEM activities within John Mason and will be displayed in and around the school.

Your logo should promote JMS and STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Maths) and can be produced by hand or on a computer.

To enter, send your final designs to [p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:p.scutt@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk) or hand it to Mr Scutt (S2), making sure to include your name and form group.

Prizes: A range of scientific prizes are available!

Deadline: Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017

Follow STEM activities via our new Twitter: JMS\_STEM

## Dates for your Diary:

We make every effort to keep our calendar on our website up-to-date: click here to view: [JMS website](#).

## Community News:



**John Mason School**  
Specialists in Visual and Performing Arts  
Wootton Road, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1JB  
[www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.johnmason.oxon.sch.uk)



*We are a friendly, caring and inclusive community:*  
Proud of our creativity  
Passionate about learning  
Keen to inspire  
Valuing ourselves and each other  
Determined to be the best that we can be




Investors in People  
Good Practice Award

Health & Wellbeing Award

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE Silver

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**Catering Assistant**  
**Grade 2 (£15,115 to £15,246 pro rata)**  
Required as soon as possible

We are looking to appoint an enthusiastic person to work as part of the catering team at John Mason School, catering for our pupils and staff as well as supporting three local primary schools in the area. Working in a friendly school environment, the successful application will be responsible for the preparation, cooking and delivery of the daily lunch service.

The successful candidate must:

- Have a good knowledge and understanding of catering establishment.
- Have energy, enthusiasm and be hard working.
- Be friendly and approachable.
- Possession of a Food Hygiene Certificate would be desirable.
- Be flexible with the ability to work under pressure and manage time effectively.
- Clean driving license.

The post is for 25 hours per week between 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. Monday to Friday term time only plus two INSET days in September.

If you would relish being part of a dedicated, hard-working and friendly team and are looking for an opportunity to really make a difference we would like to hear from you.

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An application pack is available from our website or from  
Ms J Howse (01235 524664, [office.4126@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.4126@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk)).  
CVs alone are not acceptable. Closing Date: Friday 20 October 2017 at 12 noon  
Applications will be considered on receipt.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.  
The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.