

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2009 AGM

This is my fourth report to an Annual General Meeting as Chairman of the Society. I'm delighted to say that this year, as Chairman, has been equally successful as the previous three years. Once again the school and centre continue to go from strength to strength in all areas of its work. We continue to push the boundaries of excellence in our service delivery in clinical care and education as well as improving the environment in which we deliver those services for our pupils, patients and staff.

If those words sound familiar to you, then you are right, they are the same words I used to open my report last year, but they are equally pertinent for this year. In fact, in many ways this last year has been perhaps the best year ever for Vranth House, certainly with regards to the financial position of the charity. That we can report such a healthy set of financial figures against the backdrop of such economic uncertainty is testament to the skills and abilities of everyone involved in Vranth House.

I'd like, if I may, to reflect on a few events that have happened over the year. As you know last year saw the major rebuilding project, the "Big Build", which provided new and improved clinical facilities and learning resources. In March of this year, with the help of all the staff here and the support of the Wooden Spoon charity who you will remember donated so much money towards the cost of the "Big Build", we were able to officially open the "Big Build" development and celebrate a significant improvement in the facilities we are able to offer to the staff and most importantly our patients and pupils. I would like to place on record my thanks to the party from the Wooden Spoon charity for their attendance and in particular to Danny Grewcock who despite being in plaster and on crutches showed not only great interest in the work that had been undertaken but also in the work of the charity.

In April the ever popular and successful Jailbreak celebrated its 26th anniversary. To raise in excess of £10,000 against such difficult financial constraints for many organisations and individuals is a marvellous achievement. Once again Sue and Peter Gould deserve our thanks for all the hard work they put into their fundraising projects.

May saw a "Light Touch" OFSTED inspection which covered 7 areas. I won't go into more details here as I am sure the head teacher's report will give you all the detail you need, but what I am delighted to tell you is we "scored" Outstanding in five areas and "Good" in two. The overall grading is once again Outstanding. This is something that as before we

should celebrate and be justly proud of. My thanks to Maureen, her team and all those involved in another very successful inspection result.

Of course we cannot ignore the current economic conditions that prevail around the world nor the forthcoming election due in this country by May next year. Undoubtedly before our next AGM we will have a clearer idea about the Government's plans for public spending and it is unlikely to be a comfortable situation for any organisation that is reliant on public finances to operate. I know the Chief Executive is working to have contracts in place before this possible round of funding cuts and I know he will do the very best to protect the work of this charity. However, we have to recognise that we need to be in a position to both try and protect what we do here but also be prepared to work with and adapt to the changing priorities of those organisations that provide the majority of funding for our work. I have a great deal of confidence that we can do that, but we have to accept that we are in somewhat uncharted waters and some changes to what we have done in the past may be needed. As always our ability to provide excellent services at value for money to the taxpayer will become ever more important but I remain, as last year, confident that Vranth House will respond to that challenge.

So I am delighted to have been able to report on yet another fantastic year for Vranth House, a year that has once again been a reflection of the sheer hard work, skill and determination of our supporters, staff and of course, our patients and pupils. I cannot promise that next years report will be so positive. None of us know the severity of the challenges ahead concerning our relationships with the public sector. What I am confident of though is that we are in as strong a position as we could hope to be in terms of our financial, infrastructural and staffing arrangements to manage those challenges.