



# Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2013 - 2014



# Vranch House

School, Clinical Centre and Registered Office:  
Pinhoe Road, Exeter, EX4 8AD  
Telephone: 01392 468333 Fax: 01392 463818  
www.vranchhouse.org

Officers & Principal Staff 2013 - 2014

## Board of the Society

**Chairman:** Sidney Torlot (to 8/05/13)  
Julia Tolman-May (from 8/05/13)  
**Vice Chairman:** Mrs J Tolman-May (to 8/05/13)  
Mr A Griffin (from 26/11/13)  
Mr Clive Rendle  
Mrs C Tailford  
Mrs A Ballman  
Dr G Humphreys+  
Col G Wheeler\*\*  
Mrs J Morgan  
Mrs S Mathieson  
Miss P Hale  
Mrs J Parsons (to 16/12/13)+  
Miss V Pavlics (from 7/01/14)+  
Mr W Richards  
Mrs R Pavitt

+Ex Officio Members  
\*\*Secretary

The persons listed above, less the ex-officio members, were the appointed Trustees and Directors of the Society for the 2013 - 2014 Financial Year

## Board of Governors

**Chairman:** Sidney Torlot (to 8/05/13)  
Julia Tolman-May (from 8/05/13)  
**Vice Chairman:** Mrs J Tolman-May (to 8/05/13)  
Mr A Griffin (from 26/11/13)  
**Secretary:** Col G Wheeler

Dr G Humphreys (to 31/07/13)\*\*  
Ms K Moss (from 31/07/13)\*\*  
Mrs J Parsons (to 16/12/13)+  
Miss V Pavlics (from 7/01/14)+  
Mrs M Wood··  
Mrs R Lye··  
Mr S Algarny··  
Miss S Williams··

··Staff Representative  
··Parent Governors  
+ Head Teacher  
\*\* Head of Therapies

## Management Committee

**Chairman:** Mr Sidney Torlot to 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Tolman-May from 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Parsons (to 16/12/13)+  
Miss V Pavlics (from 7/01/14)+  
Col G Wheeler  
Dr G Humphreys

## Principal Staff

**Chief Executive**  
Colonel G F Wheeler MPhil., CGIA  
**Head Teacher**  
Mrs J Parsons BA (Hons.) PGCE, PG Cert.SEN, QTVI (to 16/12/13)  
Miss V Pavlics M.Ed (SEN) (from 7/01/14)  
**Head of Therapies**  
Dr G Humphreys D.PT, MSc., MCSP (to 16/12/13)  
Ms K Moss BSc (Hons), MCSP (from 31/07/13)

## Consulting Physicians

Mr P J A Cox MS FRCS (Orth) FRCS (Ed)  
*Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon*  
Dr R J Tomlinson BMed Sci BMBS MRCP MRCPCH  
*Consultant Paediatrician*  
Dr M W Quinn MD FRCPCH DCH  
*Consultant Paediatrician*  
Dr E Thomas MB BS BSc MRCP  
*Consultant Paediatrician*

## Orthotists

Nina Darke and Nick Macintosh  
Exeter Mobility Centre

## Vranch House School and Centre is:

Registered under the Charities Act 1960  
Registered number 1002700

## A Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered Number 2599511

## Vranch House School is:

An Independent School approved  
under the Education Act 1981

*Front cover pictures:*  
*Left to Right*

Joshua - Class 3  
Caitlin - Class 1  
Imogen - Class 1

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2014 AGM

I am always surprised and delighted at the challenges our charity faces and the ways these are overcome by our staff. For any charity working in the state sector alongside state services these are very difficult times indeed. Since the economy fell off a cliff in 2008 public money is in short supply. Even now, six years later, we are only just leaving recession and despite signs of healthy growth the amount of money the government borrows to pay for public services is still greater than the amount it receives from tax. This means that there will be little relaxation in rates of tax – which restricts charitable giving – and little prospect of our state partners (the local Clinical Commissioning Groups of the NHS and Devon County Council) increasing what we are paid to provide our clinical and educational services. The effect of this can be seen in our audited accounts which the Chief Executive will talk about later. The amount we receive from our two partners has not changed in six years by so much as a single penny.

Against this gloomy background, how has the charity performed? Remarkably, very well indeed. Outpatients and school pupil numbers have been maintained at over 2,200 and 22 respectively while average waiting times have been reduced to just two-thirds of the national benchmark (twelve weeks against an eighteen week target). The total number of employed staff increased to 67 while churn (the rate at which people leave us) is very low (around 5% a year) and absences due to sickness was slightly less than three days per employee per year (the average in the state sector is 16.7 days). Despite the financial gloom, the charity remains solvent. If depreciation (which is not a charge in cash) is removed, we made a surplus of £33,242. A further £98,741 went to a legal pension debt created because one of our



*Chairman  
Julia Tolman-May*

old pension funds developed a deficit. If this unusual expenditure had not taken place, the cash surplus for the year would have exceeded £120,000.

We have also somehow managed to reward our excellent staff as they properly deserve. Although the NHS has had an effective pay freeze for over three years, Vbranch House has had only one pay freeze in the last six years. I am delighted to report that the delivery of our NHS services through the partnership of our Clinical Director, Ginny Humphries, and our Head of Therapies, Kate Moss, has earned us the second of two annual quality improvement payments. Our new Head Teacher, Viktoria Pavlics, has revitalised our educational services by developing novel ways of delivering a revised curriculum. This enables an ability to target the curriculum to individual pupils with the greatest possible efficiency in terms of staff time and resources. At the same time, all the charity's processes, policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated. To all the staff who have worked so hard to bring down waiting times, meet all our quality targets and to make the learning experience at Vbranch House School a valuable one for all pupils we can only say a very sincere "thank you"!

Julia Tolman-May  
Chairman



## Vranch House

(The Devon & Exeter Spastics Society Limited)

### Report of the Board of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2014

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2014.

#### Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity Name: The Devon & Exeter Spastics Society

(Working Title): Vranch House

Charity Registration Number: 1002700

Company Registration Number: 02599511

Registered Office & Operational Address: Vranch House School & Centre  
Pinhoe Road, EXETER  
DEVON, EX4 8AD

Auditors: Kirk Hills, 5 Barnfield Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1RF

Bankers: NatWest, St Thomas Branch, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1DB

Solicitors: Foot Anstey, Senate Court, Exeter, EX1 1NT

#### Board of the Society

Mr Sidney Torlot Chairman to 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman from 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Tolman-May Vice Chairman to 8 May 2013  
Mr A J Griffin Vice Chairman from 26 Nov 2013  
Mrs A Ballman  
Miss P Hale  
Mrs S Mathieson  
Mrs J Morgan Resigned 26 November 2013  
Mr W Richards  
Mrs C Tailford  
Mrs R Pavitt  
Mr C Rendle

Col G Wheeler  
(Secretary, *ex officio* as Chief Executive with no vote)

Mrs J Parsons to 13 December 2013  
(*ex officio* as Head Teacher with no vote)

Dr G Humphreys  
(*ex officio* as Clinical Director with no vote)

Miss V Pavlics from 7 January 2014  
(*ex officio* as Head Teacher with no vote)

#### Company Secretary & Chief Executive

Colonel G Wheeler

#### Board of Governors

Mr Sidney Torlot Chairman to 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman from 8 May 2013  
Mr A J Griffin Vice Chairman from 26 Nov 2013  
Col G Wheeler Secretary  
Mrs J Parsons Head Teacher to 16 Dec 2013  
Miss V Pavlics Head Teacher from 7 Jan 2014  
Dr G Humphreys Head of Therapies to 31 July 2013  
Mrs K Moss Head of Therapies from 31 July 2013  
Miss V Parsons Staff member  
Mrs M Wood Parent Governor  
Mr S Algarny Parent Governor  
Miss S Williams Parent Governor

#### Management Committee

Mr Sidney Torlot Chairman to 8 May 2013  
Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman from 8 May 2013  
Col G Wheeler  
Dr G Humphreys to 31 July 2013  
Mrs K Moss from 31 July 2013  
Mrs J Parsons to 16 December 2013  
Miss V Pavlics from 7 January 2014

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Governing Document

The organisation is a Charity limited by guarantee (Registered Number 2599511), incorporated on the 9th of April 1991, and an independent charity (Registered Number 1002700) registered with the Charity Commission on the 15th of May 1991. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Instrument of Management. Any person over the age of 18 can become a member of the charity on payment of an annual fee of £2 (for those not in work) or £5 (for those in employment). There are currently 79 members each of whom are liable to the extent of their membership fee in the event of the company being wound up. All members have the right to vote at General Meetings.

### Appointment of Trustees

The number of Trustees can be set at any General Meeting but has never varied from a mean of twelve between the minimum of eight and maximum of sixteen stated in the Governing Document. Invitations to nominate Trustees are circulated every year to the membership and these nominations are ratified at the Annual General Meeting. The senior officers (Chairman and Vice Chairman) are elected every year and the Chief Executive acts as Company Secretary. Employees of the charity may be members of the charity and the three senior employees are *ex officio* members of the Board of Trustees but no employee is entitled to vote at any meeting of the Trustees. The Executive Committee of the charity is known as the Board of the Society and the Board may co-opt any member of the charity to fill a specialist role.

### Trustee Induction & Training

Trustees are briefed frequently on their obligations under charity and company law, the structure of the charity and its operating procedures as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and in those changes in statute which bear directly on the work of the charity (principally legislation in the areas of Education and Health). A briefing document has been prepared alongside a more formal induction and training process. Trustees are usually appointed because of specialist skills but the charity will meet any identified need for specialist training.

### Organisation

The Board of the Society has strategic oversight of the charity and meets three times a year. The Board establishes all policy for the general direction and operation of the charity and meets to review those policies and to hear a record of operations. The Board employs a Chief Executive to work with a Head Teacher and Head of Therapy to oversee, direct and drive forward the Board's policies for the School and the Clinic (the principal operations of the charity). The Chief Executive has delegated powers for the day-to-day operation



of the Board's policies for employment, finance, contracts, legal compliance (including Equal Opportunities), buildings and acquisitions, risk assessment and mitigation, Health and Safety and business development. To assist the Head Teacher and meet statutory obligations for maintained schools, the Board has established a Board of Governors for the school. The Board of Governors has direct control of those matters bearing on the delivery of educational services; matters relating to finance, employment and resources, if not within the competence of the Governors, are referred to the Board of Trustees. The Head of Therapy is responsible to the Trustees for the full delivery of the clinical contract which includes professional and service delivery standards. In this she is assisted by the Chief Executive who retains direct control of all matters relating to the contract.

### **Related Parties**

The Society has formal and informal arrangements and relationships with many other statutory and voluntary bodies. Principal amongst these is the 25-year Strategic Partnership Agreement with NHS Devon and Devon County Council under which the charity is joint-funded for about 40% of the costs of the statutory educational and clinical services it provides. These services include the assessment of potential pupils, the education of pupils at Vranth House School, the review of pupil development, the inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools and the delivery of clinical therapies at Vranth House and in the community all over Devon.

The network of national and local charities and voluntary bodies is too complex and numerous to describe adequately but the Society retains active links with The Exeter Foundation, DreamAway, Whizz Kids, Children in Need, CEDA, A Brighter Tomorrow and the Norman Family Trust. A similar network of local groups and individuals continues to assist the Society in raising funds for children at Vranth House and this incredibly generous and loyal support provides a much-needed and indispensable resource. The charity has also forged close links with the NHS funded Integrated Children's Service Specialist Children's Assessment Centre which it hosts in a purpose built facility on the Vranth House site. It is worth noting that the children at Vranth House School raise money each year for other charities which have included Comic Relief and the Royal British Legion.

### **Risk Management**

As a normal part of the annual business cycle the Society reviews its Risk Assessments. These include financial management, accounting, security of cash and removable assets, insurances, fire and Health & Safety. The outcome of these assessments is reported to the Trustees by the Chief Executive. The Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Cash Handling, Legionella and Fire Risk Assessments are translated into operating policies which are available to all employees, together with all the other policy

documents, on the Charity's website. Employees at every level are encouraged to contribute to the continuous business of risk assessment through the Staff Meetings held every month.

### **Objectives and Activities**

The charity's objects and principal activities continue to be those of:

- i Promoting and providing facilities for the care, education, training, treatment and welfare in their respective aspects of people with physical difficulties.
- ii Advising, helping or catering for the needs of the parents or others having the care of people with physical difficulties.

The core activities arising from these aims are the education of children with physical difficulties from the age of two to twelve at Vranth House School and the provision of paediatric therapy and clinical treatment to children as outpatients at locations throughout Devon. The charity has also developed Opportunity Technology, a not-for-profit service which designs and installs assisted mobility tracks and robotic vehicles throughout England and Wales.

### **Public Benefit – General Statement**

The Trustees have established a policy to review continuously all the charity's activities and the development of services to ensure that they remain consonant with the requirements of the 2006 Charities Act, and particularly with Section 4 of the Act (the need to demonstrate Public Benefit). The charity operates in partnership with statutory bodies under guidance from the Office for the Third Sector in order to provide expertise, treatment and enhanced services to children with physical disabilities. It does not charge fees but receives about 60% of the total cost of the services it provides to NHS Devon and Devon County Council. Referrals to the service are made by Local Authorities and all referrals are seen for assessment and the majority of assessed referrals are retained for treatment or given a place in the school. The referral process, whether as a therapy outpatient or potential school pupil, is not controlled by the charity but by NHS Devon and Devon County Council. A school placement or therapy intervention might be deemed inappropriate at the assessment stage but only for reasons that are cogent, demonstrable and compliant with benchmarked national practice. The charity is as public a body as its statutory partners and enters into no private arrangements for individual treatment. No member of the public is denied the services provided by the charity provided those services are assessed to be suitable and appropriate for the individual concerned.

### **Public Benefit - Aims and Strategies**

In order to direct the activities of the charity in such a way that Public Benefit can be identified clearly, the Trustees have set out the following Aims and Strategies;



- **School Aim** The school is to be organised, equipped, staffed, managed and operated to the highest national standards.

- **Strategy to Achieve Aim** The Governing Body will monitor the established Continuous Improvement Programme and the School Audit Cycle with the intention of maintaining the high OFSTED gradings of "outstanding" and "good" achieved in 2005, 2009 and 2012.

- **Clinic Aim** The charity's clinical activities are to be organised, equipped, staffed, managed and operated to the highest national standards.

- **Strategy to Achieve Aim** The Trustees will monitor clinical operations with the intention of maintaining its unbroken record of meeting the targets set by the NHS and for satisfying its clients. To do this, the Trustees will use tools such as reports and standards set by the National Service Framework and quality audits conducted in alliance with our statutory partners.

- **Financial Performance Aim** The charity's financial affairs are to be conducted to the highest levels of public probity and according to the policies and procedures established for service and capital development consistent with the need to demonstrate Public Benefit.

- **Strategy to Achieve Aim** The Trustees will consider financial Performance Indicators, other financial records and Risk Assessments at all their meetings to ensure that all our financial processes meet the requirements of both the Statements of Recommended Practice of the Charity Commission and Companies House. They will look at the record of expenditure to ensure that public monies are used exclusively for the Public Benefit.

#### **Public Benefit - Achievements and Performance**

The Trustees are pleased to note that the record of operations for the year under review complied with the aims and strategies set out by the Board and in all respects have exceeded expectations. The Trustees approved an investment program for the year that provided for the payment of the Section 75 (1995 Pensions Act) debt accrued by the Federated Pension Scheme (entered into thirty years ago and closed to new members in March 2009), for normal maintenance and some improvement of the main Vranth House building but the investment plan also aimed at developing a surplus for the following year.

Service delivery remained at much the same levels as the preceding five years with an average of twenty-two children on the school roll and over 2,200 children on the clinical list. The uptake on provided services has been very encouraging, with growth in every area of activity and, particularly, the out-reach FunFit programme which aims to train school staff to recognise and use intervention techniques for Developmental Coordination Disorder. The sale of the old residential hostel at Hill Barton House was

concluded in June 2013 for a price of £490,000 (the valuation held on our accounts was £475,000).

The multi-disciplinary Inclusion Advisory Service continues to make a substantial and remarkable difference to the inclusion of Vranth House Pupils into mainstream schools. This service provides advice and support to receiving mainstream schools and programs of extensive training to mainstream school staff, much of which will be tailored to the specific needs of the individual child. The rate of Inclusion of Vranth House School children into mainstream schools varies according to the nature of the disabilities at any time. At between 60% and 80% the Inclusion record it is one of the best in the country. No charge to the Authority is made for this service.

The Trustees are pleased to report the effectiveness of the charity's ongoing and significant investment in Continuous Professional Development for its staff. All the therapists and teachers are engaged in or have access to programmes leading to Master's degrees and all the staff employed to have direct contact with children are trained to the very highest Safeguarding level (Level 3).

Optech, a non-profit making service run by the charity which designs, manufactures and installs guided mobility equipment throughout England and Wales, had its best year in 2008. The recession has contracted the education and domestic markets and activity levels have been challenging. The contribution made by the Mobility Project Manager and our Technical Consultant to many of the other Vranth House projects is both invaluable and highly commended. In particular the technical team has taken on the management and operation of the hydrotherapy pool. With the application of telemetry, some capital investment in new plant and a new pool liner, the cost of running the pool has been substantially reduced.

The contract monitoring reports and meetings held quarterly across the year have revealed that Vranth House is providing an excellent service. Median waiting times for this year across all services was twelve weeks against a national target of eighteen weeks, all service development targets were met in the year under review and the poll of out-patient opinion shows that 98% of our referrals place Vranth House in the top category, 2% in the next one down and none at all in the lower three categories. Our record of never having received a formal complaint continues. Extra investment in the Specialist Children's Assessment Centre (0 to 5 year old) physiotherapy service has seen a dramatic decrease in waiting times and plans have been made to amalgamate the Honeylands service with Vranth House to effect further and it is hoped dramatic improvements. A radical review of how the curriculum is delivered at Vranth House School, conducted by the new Head Teacher, promises considerable benefit in the effectiveness of delivering a personalised curriculum to each pupil. Further changes in the structure and content of the curriculum itself and in the organisation of the



teaching teams shows exciting potential for further improvement in the way the school operates.

### Plans for Future Periods

The new Service Led Agreement with Devon County Council and NHS Devon has operated since the 1st of April 2011. The new structure of the NHS means that some of the commissioning arrangements for services has changed to reflect the inception of Clinical Commissioning Groups but the overall character of the 25-year agreement will remain unaltered. Our principal Commissioning partner is now the North, East and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW CCG) working in concert with Devon County Council. The long-term aim of increasing the geographical cover, depth and level of resource of these services is recognised in the Agreement. The bulk of Integrated Children's Services (ICS) has been contracted to a third party (Virgin Care Limited) which works closely with Vranth House to provide many of the services operating out of our new Honeylands building (the Specialist Children's Assessment Centre).

The charity continues to establish benchmarks in clinical and educational practice in order to meet its goal of not just meeting but exceeding service delivery standards. Preparations for the new OFSTED regime continue and the work of the NHS Heads of Professions Team – in which our Clinical Director plays a leading role as the physiotherapy Head of Profession for the NHS in Devon – informs the continuous development of our clinical services. The charity has been involved in the combined agency review of the local Children's Development Centre and this has led to a re-validation of centre-based expertise, novel methods for delivering this expertise into the community and new, far more integrated, ways of working.

The onset of the present recession and its effect on investment in public services will have an effect on this charity. The Trustees have established a conservative policy for future capital spend and for the revenue development of all the charity services. Whilst our statutory partners are actively engaged in establishing new ways of delivering services, in which this charity will play a significant part, there will be a need for retrenchment and for adopting new methods of working in order to sustain current activity levels at less cost.

### Strategic Report

Notwithstanding the strategies for maintaining Public Benefit (q.v. Public Benefit Aims & Strategies above) the Trustees, having reviewed the strategic objectives of the charity in the light of possible obstructions to achieving them, have determined that:

1. **Income Growth** The next five years are likely to include a period of between two and three years in which national fiscal disciplines and retrenchment in public service investment continues. As a result it is highly probable that

the gross quantum of the combined contract for services with NEW CCG and Devon County Council will not increase at all. Income sources outside the contract must be developed further to meet inflationary pressures particularly in that pre-eminent component of expenditure which is staff pay. The charity has managed to do this for the last six years in which the quantum has not changed and the Trustees therefore believe that the risk of net expenditure exceeding net income is low.

2. **Income Security** The combined contract is non-competitive because of the high amount of public benefit developed by it (around 40% of the true costs of the statutory services provided by the charity is funded by the charity). The contract has a twenty-five year life (until 2036) and the only threat to it is a sustained or existential failure to meet the service quality standards. The charity contribution is largely met from revenue charges it waives, principally for the use of capital facilities which the charity owns; thus there is a very low risk of this not continuing. Our contract partners understand and have agreed that at some point the charity might be unable to fund the currently outstanding levels of response times with no increase in payment.

3. **Quality Standards** The Chief Executive is tasked with maintaining a continuous cycle of Risk Assessment reviews assisted and advised by the Heads of Department in the Senior Management Team (the Head of Therapies and the Head Teacher). Principal amongst these are those relating to Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Financial Probity. The on-going review and development of these risk assessments and the policies and procedures that flow from them is of the highest priority as essential elements of the charity's strategic interest.

### Financial Review

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income for the year ending the 31st of March 2014 of £1,631,559 (£1,620,685 in 2013), a small increase of £10,874. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,294,337 (£845,931 in 2013). This increase of £448,406 is largely the result of the net proceeds from the sale of Hill Barton House. The Society has tangible Fixed Assets reflecting the purchase of the Freehold of £4,773,509 (£5,315,136 in 2013) the reduction of £541,627 being the aggregate of depreciation and the sale of Hill Barton House. It has Total Funds Employed of £6,067,846 (£6,161,067 in 2013). Of this total £4.8m is the market valuation of the Vranth House site. Adding back depreciation of £126,463 (a non monetary expense), the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £33,242. Of the £1,739,780 of Total Expenditure, £98,741 is the amount held as a creditor for the Section 75 debt. Although this is expenditure in the year in which it occurs it is very much a one-off charge which might have been levied in any of the 5 years since 2009 when the charity was first notified of the liability.



If this charge is removed from the nominal levels of expenditure and the pattern of income and expenditure had continued as we expected, the surplus would be in the region of £120,000.

Important transactions in the year include the contract income of £1,456,560 from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from charitable (not contracted) and all other sources was £174,999. The nominal leasehold annual rent at mid-range for a property like Vranck House is in the order of £386,000. This is not charged to our statutory partners and forms a substantial part of our charitable benefit. The strong financial performance of the charity is remarkable considering that the contract sums for the original educational and clinical work has not changed at all since 2009.

The Trustees are content that all expenditure made in the accounting period met with the Public Benefit aims and strategies as set out in an earlier section of this report.

### **Reserves policy**

The Trustees have established a liquid reserves policy so that it is consonant with the revenue interests of a service charity. By setting the development of liquid reserves to the equivalent of annual operating costs, revenue will be developed from interest which will enable further development in our services. The forecast level of funding is such that an operating surplus is expected for the current year and the maintained reserve is such to provide a cushion in the event that either of the largest sources of income is threatened. The current recession and unprecedented low interest rates have proved the wisdom of establishing and maintaining this policy.

### **Investment Policy**

The Memorandum and Articles provide the Trustees with the power to make investments as they choose but consistent with current Charity Commission advice. The charity's cash assets are invested in a state-owned Business Reserve but we will utilise opportunities for low-risk investment if interest rates improve.

### **Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements**

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- (a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- (b) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- (c) Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume

that the Charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In accordance with Company Law and as the Company's Directors, we certify that:

- So far as we are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- As the Directors of the Company we have taken all the steps that we are required to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

### **Compliance**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small company regime Section 419(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

### **Auditors**

A resolution proposing Kirk Hills to be re-appointed as auditors of the Charity will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

### **Approval**

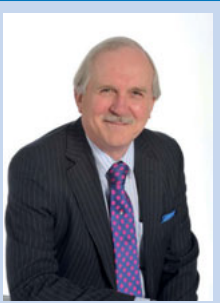
This report was approved by the Board of the Society (the Board of Directors and Trustees) on the 12th of November 2014 and signed on its behalf.

J Tolman-May  
Chairman

November 2014



## Chief Executive's Report - Financial Information



Colonel Wheeler,  
Chief Executive  
Joined 1993

### Financial Information abstracted from the Audited Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2014

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2013 – 2014 Financial Year. The headline financial news is included in the report of the Directors and Trustees but the following financial information is worth high lighting:

- Income rose by £10,874 from £1,620,685 to £1,631,559. Debtors were reduced from £35,985 to £25,962 simply because capital project pre-payments were less.
- Net Current Assets increased dramatically by £448,406 from £845,931 to £1,294,337 largely as a result of the net receipts from the sale of Hill Barton House. Total Funds now stand at £6,067,846.
- Tangible Fixed Assets dropped with depreciation and the loss of the asset value of Hill Barton House from £5,315,136 to £4,773,509. Depreciation is a more significant sum than hitherto as a result of the highly commendable development of the asset value of the charity arising from the purchase of the Vranth House site and the development of the new Specialist Children's Assessment Centre.
- The charity paid a Statutory Debt of £98,741 to a pension fund under Section 75 of the 1995 Pension Act for which it had kept a contingency sum for the last five years.
- With Depreciation and the one-off payment of the Section 75 debt discounted the Society made a net trading surplus over the year of nearly £120,000 – an outstanding performance given the fiscal disciplines operating in the NHS and Local Government which has seen their contract payments frozen for the last 7 years.
- We have maintained the high number of pupils in the school and outpatients seen by the clinic whilst continuing investment in the buildings at Vranth House and in the Inclusion and IT services.

The Trustees agreed a programme of capital investments for the Financial Year which provided for continuing maintenance of the Vranth House estate (mostly for rebuilding interior rooms at Vranth House) and for further investment in the Hydrotherapy Pool and the New Honeylands building.

### Future Plans

The charity's strategic objective for the next five years is to embody and develop the contract partnership with Devon County Council and the NHS North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group. The immediate objective is to continue to demonstrate performance compliance with the requirements of the joint contract and to continue to fund service objectives so that all the benchmarks are exceeded (as they were in 2014).

In the longer term, the Charity aims to continue development of its services, continue the investment programme by further developing charitable income and work with its partners to respond to financial retrenchment by adaptive working practises. Our long established financial policy of holding reserves amounting to no less than a year's operating costs has proved its worth on many occasions. Given the uncertainty and instability of the financial markets and the continued imperative of national fiscal discipline we intend to maintain and further develop this reserve. The policy of not charging capital costs in any of our contracts forms the basis of our charitable benefit by contributing significantly to the 46% of the costs of the statutory services we provide. It should be noted that our statutory partners have frozen our funding at 2008 levels; that in 2015 we are embarking on what well may be an eighth year without any provision for inflation. This inevitably means that the level of contribution this charity makes to statutory services must increase or the high standard of the services we provide to the Public on behalf of the State will suffer. It is, however, highly unlikely that this can continue.

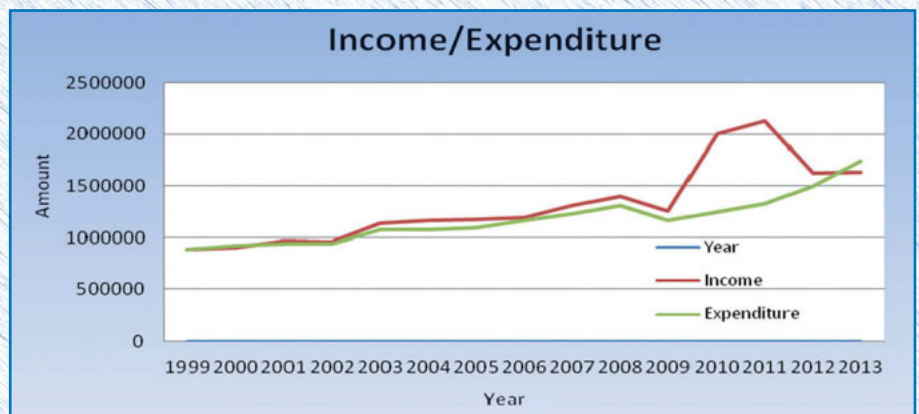
Colonel Graeme Wheeler  
Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account	2014	2013	2012
Gross Income	£1,631,559	£1,620,685	£2,127,670
Gross Expenditure	£1,739,780	£1,623,075	£1,326,162
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	-£108,221	-£2,390	£801,508
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£119,784	£123,795	

### Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2014	2013	2012	2011
Total Funds	0.43%	0.70%	1.00%	5.60%
Creditors as a Percentage of:				
Net Current Assets	11.80%	7.60%	7.50%	17.60%
As a Percentage of Total Funds				
Profit/Loss for the Year	1.98%	2.0%	13.50%	3.90%
Revenue Costs	6.90%	7.7%	3.00%	4.90%

Notes: 1. Profit is shown net of depreciation.



Notes: 1. Expenditure is unadjusted and includes the non-monetary expenditure of depreciation and the Section 75 Debt.

2. The Auditor's Report for 2013/14 is available on request at a cost of £2.00 per copy but may be viewed at no cost but by prior arrangement at Vranth House or on the Charity Commission website at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).





**Viktoria Pavlics**  
Head Teacher  
Joined 2005

I gained my conductor-teacher diploma at the International Peto Institute in Budapest, Hungary in 2007. The same year I completed a sign language interpreter diploma. Following my move to England I worked at Robins Respite Centre and at Dartington Primary School, providing supply to Bidwell Brook School and

Vranch House. I joined the Inclusion Team at Vranch House in 2005. I was supporting mainstream settings on adapting the curriculum. In 2011 I celebrated the birth of my little boy and the completion of the Masters in Special Educational Needs; 2012 brought me my second child, a little girl this time. In 2014 I took on the exciting challenge of the headship of Vranch House. The colourful personalities of the children, the supportive families and the brilliant teaching and therapy staff help my work everyday.

### 1) What have the changes been this year?

- Staff redeployment to keep in line with best safeguarding practice
- New timetable system
- New whole school curriculum
- Change from PIVAT to CEM-Durham assessment tool
- Whole school trip
- Families' Saturday coffee mornings
- Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan 2014-2017
- Whole School Development Plan
- Changing Individual Education Plans to My Goals

### Staff redeployment to keep in line with best safeguarding practice

It is stated in our Safeguarding Policy that staff move to different class groups every two years. The new class teams are:

**Class 1 – Teacher** - Michelle Woodgates, BSc Early Childhood Studies, PGE Early Years, PGCE in Learning Disabilities - Profound, Severe & Complex (Distinction)

#### Teaching Assistants:

- Chelsea Armstrong, BTEC Level 3 Childcare, Learning & Development
- Tammy Brown, Level 3 Diploma Children & Young People's Workforce, Level 3 Diploma Teaching Assistant
- Helen House, Level 3 Diploma Children & Young People's Workforce

**Class 2 – Teacher** - Chloe Bond, B.Ed(Hons), QTS

#### Teaching Assistants:

- Veronica Lye, LSA Award GQA Level 4
- Sandra Selley, NVQ-Care Level 2-Developmental Care

**Class 3 – Teacher** - Deborah Down, BA(Hons), PGCE, Diploma in Child Psychology

#### Teaching Assistants:

- Julie Lobb, Level 3 Diploma Children & Young People's Workforce
- Debbie Prout, LSA Award GQA Level 3

#### New timetable system

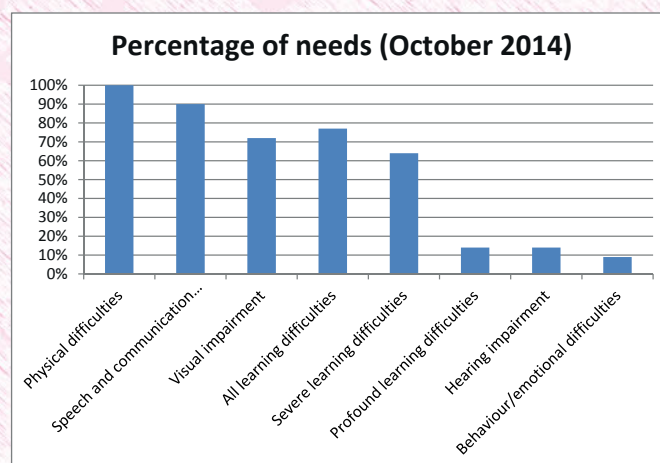
During the school day most of the children are regularly taken out of the classroom for individual therapies. To enable the therapists and the teaching staff to work to the same timing we created school days with five 40 minute sessions. All classes start the day with circle time - registration, sharing feelings, weather forecasting, sharing news and discussing the daily timetable by completing the visual timetable. During some lessons each day the children mix and join small groups of children from other classes who are working towards similar goals. Many therapy sessions take place and are incorporated into class time to lessen the time pupils need to spend out of the classroom.

There is a morning and an afternoon break each day. Each afternoon all children attend therapy or educational sessions in the outdoors. There are whole school assemblies to celebrate special achievements as well as to learn about the topic, RE and to see and hear about the news and different cultures of the world. We have regular visitors to assemblies talking about their interests.

With the introduction of the new timetable a school bell was installed to mark the end of the lessons and break times. Many of our pupils attend mainstream settings and are familiar with the bell. So now "we are a proper school" as one of our pupils said.

#### New whole school curriculum

The needs of our pupils vary greatly and there is no existing scheme of work that would offer appropriately differentiated learning for our pupils.



The four teachers researched the National Curriculum, the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, QCA, SEAL and other documents and wrote our own curriculum. The curriculum is based on the seven areas of learning to make sure we are offering a truly broad and balanced learning experience

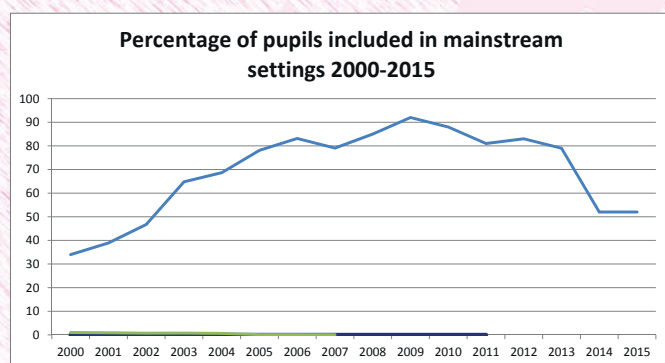


to all children. The whole school curriculum then differentiated by the class teachers according to the children's age and development.

Seven areas of learning / National Curriculum		
Prime areas	Communication and language	Listening and attention Understanding Speaking <i>Foreign language (KS2)</i>
	Physical development	Moving and handling Health and self-care <i>Physical education</i>
	Personal, social and emotional development	Self-confidence and self-awareness Managing feelings and behaviour Making relationships
Specific areas	Literacy	Reading Writing <i>English (Core)</i>
	Mathematics	Numbers Shape, space and measures <i>Mathematics (Core)</i>
	Understanding the world	People and communities The world Technology <i>Science (Core)</i> <i>Computing</i> <i>Geography</i> <i>History</i> <i>Religious Education</i>
	Expressive arts and design	Exploring and using media and materials Being imaginative <i>Art and design</i> <i>Design and technology</i> <i>Music</i>

### Change from PIVAT to CEM-Durham assessment tool

We have changed the assessment tool the teachers are using when assessing pupil progress. The use of this new tool enables us to be more in line with the assessments of our mainstream partner schools.



The decline in number of pupils being included in mainstream settings is due to the more complex needs of the school children. Vranth House promotes inclusion and is keen to set up and support such placements in the children's own community.

### Whole school trip

In June 2014 the whole school walked from Lympstone to Exmouth. We saw many different types of transport which tied in with our topic (transport) in the summer term. We are hopeful that this was the first of many annual whole school trips.

### Families' Saturday coffee mornings

Families are invited quarterly on a Saturday morning to exchange information and experience with fellow parents over a cup of coffee whilst their children are taking part in art and craft and game activities organised by staff volunteers.

## Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan 2014-2017

The Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan for the coming three years contains some exciting big plans, such as the complete rebuild of the hydrotherapy pool building; the toilet area of Class 3 will be refurbished as well as the speech and language therapy room.

### Whole School Development Plan

The Whole School Development Plan for the coming year include enhanced teaching of writing, improve bank of switch operated toys and small equipment, reinstate the school council, create an indoor sensory trail and a greater outdoor growing environment.

The detailed Disability Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan and the Whole School Development Plan are available from the Head Teacher.

### Changing Individual Education Plans to My Goals

Termly 'My Goals' are written and evaluated by all Vranth House professionals, involving parents and pupils. We changed the layout to make it more pupil centred and to follow the seven areas of learning. We send home the teachers' planning and termly leaflets with ideas on how parents can support their child's learning.

### 2) What have been our successes this year?

- We continue to work successfully and have been welcoming teaching students from the University of Exeter and Plymouth University. Exeter College students attend on a regular basis as do Peninsula Medical students.
- For many years in a row "Whizz-Kidz week" again was a great success. All children participate in learning new wheelchair skills from the inspirational Whizz-Kidz ambassadors.
- Class visits during this year included the Northcott Theatre and Offer Nurseries.
- A giant mobile planetarium visited us and children enjoyed learning about stars and planets.
- We enjoyed a visit and demonstration from the Exeter City Youth Football Team and Tim Mock model helicopter and aeroplane enthusiast.
- Noah the dog for the disabled and his life companion, Phil, visited us a few times.
- Through the webcam we witnessed the blue tit eggs hatch which was a unique experience.
- The topic in the Summer term was 'transport' on road, rail, water, air and space. A policeman visited us and the children could sit in his car, we saw an army jeep, a campervan and we heard about transport on horse back.
- Families' Saturday coffee mornings were well received by parents and all had a fun time. We hope that the fourth coffee morning will be as successful as the first three were.



### 3) How much progress do pupils make?

Pupils at Vranck House make good progress when their baseline achievements are taken into account. Teachers carry out continuous assessments to ensure that the targets set for the pupil are appropriate and challenging. Termly full assessments are recorded in individual assessment folders as well as the evaluation of each 'My Goal'. At the end of each academic year the achievements are compared to targets set the year previously.

### 4) How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?

- Individual 'My Goals' linked to education health care plan/statement of special educational needs and annual review, with a focus on personalised learning, individual needs and life skills development.
- Individual 'My Goals' targets included across all planning for class and group work, using a multi-professional approach.
- Formative and summative assessment including pre-entry assessment, Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum profiles, termly assessment of National Curriculum and P Scale levels and sub levels, annual school report, annual and interim review reports.
- Annual monitoring of pupil progress using Durham data analysis.
- Moderation of individual pupil assessment, including links with mainstream schools.
- Regular meetings between staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- Targeted curriculum.
- Input and support from Educational Psychologist and Advisory Teachers as necessary.
- Personal Education Plans for pupils away from school for a prolonged time.
- Music therapy, as appropriate.

### 5) What have pupils told us about the school, and what we have done as a result?

- Pupils have enjoyed the interactive displays in the corridors and we are continuing to develop

an interesting indoor and outdoor learning environment.

- The recently reformed school council, through which pupils have an opportunity to contribute towards ideas and decisions. For example the school council decided on the plants the school will grow.
- School council members feed back their decisions to the whole school.
- We are encouraging pupil voice across the school community.

### 6) How do we make sure our pupils are safe and well supported?

- School nurse on duty at all times and good staffing levels.
- Pupils are encouraged to let staff know if they have any problems.
- Regular clinics held at school: paediatric, orthopaedic, orthoptic, audiology and wheelchair clinics.
- Children's diets monitored.
- Provision of healthy snacks at break times.
- Effective links between home, respite, transport and mainstream placements to ensure up to date knowledge on learning, therapy, medical or communication needs are shared.
- Effective induction of new staff.
- Good standard of moving and handling, including regular updates and training.
- Safeguarding policies in place and a high level of staff awareness.
- Regular child protection and safeguarding updates.
- Liaison with mainstream schools regarding issues such as attainment, moderation and attendance.
- Regular teachers, staff and support staff meetings to raise concerns or issues.
- A Staff Governor who provides an easily accessible link between staff and management. The Staff Governor represents the views of staff at support and governors meetings.



Exmouth - Final destination of our whole school trip in May 2014



- Comprehensive health and safety policy with regular premises checks.
- Closed circuit security cameras outside the building.
- Secure boundaries around school.
- Good security procedures – registration of visitors, car parking permits.
- Visitors to school informed re policy on use of mobile phones in school.
- Regular fire drills.
- High levels of investment in buildings and equipment and regular maintenance.

### **7) How do our absence rates compare with other schools?**

The total number of pupils of compulsory school age on roll for at least one session - 17.

Percentage of pupil sessions (half days) missed through authorised absence – 12.25% and through unauthorised absence – 3.07 % (largely due to unavoidable problems with one pupil).

### **8) What activities are available to pupils?**

- Broad and balanced curriculum.
- Music therapy sessions for individual children.
- Outdoor nature trail and classroom including tracker mobility device.
- ICT – children individually assessed and given full access to ICT with fully accessible Learning Resource Centre.
- Access to eye gaze computer.
- Swimming / hydrotherapy.
- P.E. and Swimming badges/certificates (as appropriate).
- Range of educational visits off-site e.g. Northcott Theatre, Inclusive Playpark, Haldon forest.
- Links with Whizz-Kidz Charity.
- Sensory room.
- Play room.

### **9) How are we working with parents and the community?**

- Parent representatives on the Board of Governors.
- Signing and moving and handling courses and Therapy/School Open Weeks.
- In school training opportunities and postural management workshops to encourage parents to try out equipment and ask the experts for advice.
- Therapy sessions provided during holidays.
- Fundraising activities for charities by the children including Children in Need and Young Epilepsy.
- Daily communication through diaries and communication aids.
- Termly educational and therapy goals and their evaluation.
- Termly parent support leaflets on how families can support their child's learning at home.
- Extensive reports written to annual reviews.
- End of year Achievement Awards.

- Special merit certificates.
- Summer Fayre.
- Student placements from universities and colleges.
- Parents and families invited to school events e.g. school play and Christmas Carols, Easter Bonnet parade, Achievement Awards assembly, Harvest Festival.
- Families' Saturday coffee mornings.
- Whole school trip in the summer term.
- Parents are encouraged to talk to the Head Teacher, the class teachers or therapists should they have any queries. Parents are welcome to join in therapy or school sessions.

### **10) What do our pupils do after leaving this school?**

Some of the pupils continue their education in their mainstream schools, if they move to full inclusion before secondary age. Some pupils go on to secondary mainstream or special schools depending on what is the most appropriate provision for the child's individual needs.

### **11) What have we done in response to our latest Ofsted Inspection in May 2012?**

Extracts from Ofsted report in May 2012:

Vranch House School “provides a good quality of education. The outstanding quality of welfare, health and safety of pupils, including safeguarding, and the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development.”

#### **What the school could do to improve further:**

Improve consistency in teaching and learning by refining the learning goals in all lessons so that they are always matched precisely to the needs of the pupils.

Learning goals are set by the teaching, therapy and nursing team in consultation with the parents and the child, as well as the mainstream setting. All children are given individual goals at each lesson.

Build on the already good assessment procedures and implement the new assessment systems consistently in classes across the school so that academic progress can be tracked more precisely.

Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 use the same assessment tool. Regular moderation takes place within Vranch House by teachers and teaching staff in the mainstream partner schools. All pupils are assessed termly to track progress and refine targets.

Improve the curriculum by implementing plans to link more closely the learning and therapeutic aspects of pupils' education.

Many therapy sessions take place and are incorporated into class time to lessen the time pupils need to spend out of the classroom. Teaching staff and therapists plan their sessions according to the whole school topic. For example during our topic 'space' the pupils in hydrotherapy session learnt to float in the pool like astronauts would do in space.





**BEVERLEY SIMCOX**  
**School Secretary**  
**Joined April 1988**

Yet another year has flown by and during that time we have seen some changes to the staff and children, saying farewell to some and welcoming others. On the administration side we said farewell to Clinical Administrator, Karen Sparks, after twelve years of sterling work in the therapy department - this was no mean feat as that Department and its workload grew rapidly during her tenure. I wish Karen all the best in her new post and also the Clinical Administration Team which has now been joined by Allie Alton-Vanderstay.

In July 2014 one pupil left the school to transfer full-time to secondary education and we wish him well in his new school. New younger children have since joined the school and I look forward to getting to know them and their families through their time at Vranth House.

Viktoria Pavlics has settled in extremely well as Head Teacher and is steering a steady ship in the best interests of the school and its pupils. During the year she commenced termly Saturday coffee mornings for the parents of present pupils and recent leavers. This has been very well received and given parents the opportunity to chat with each other whilst the children are entertained.

Life at Vranth House continues to be busy but it is a great place to work with amiable colleagues working together in the best interests of the inspiring children and with very supportive management.



Libby is feeding Ollie, the llame

**SUE PHILLIPS - Finance Officer - Joined 1992**

I started work at Vranth House School in 1992 and have held various positions within the school. In 2003 I became the Finance Officer. I am responsible for all the daily financial functions, salaries and record keeping of the school.



I enjoy my work but I also enjoy working in an environment where there is always something going on, it may be listening to the children singing or laughing whilst they are having a therapy session or it could be watching their delight as they take part in a school play. Whatever is happening you can guarantee each day will be different and that's a good thing.



**TRACEY WARD**  
**Receptionist/Secretary**  
**Joined April 2005**

In October 2014 I changed my hours from term time to full-time and have taken on additional administrative duties within the Therapy Department. My workload has increased and I am

enjoying the new varied role and challenges that this presents.

Working at Vranth House is never quiet; there are lots of children coming in for various Paediatric Clinics and Assessments. Most importantly, I enjoy seeing our children coming into school with big smiles on their faces and it is lovely when they drop by my office for a chat.

All of the children that started around the same time I did have now left Vranth House to either attend mainstream on a full-time basis or High School. It has been lovely to see them grow and mature over the years and I always look forward to their visits when they come back to Vranth House for Clinic appointments.

Every day offers a new challenge and I can honestly say that it is a privilege to work with a team that pull together so well and make everyone that comes to Vranth, for whatever purpose, feel welcome!



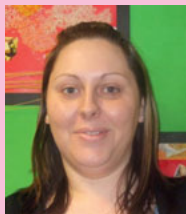
Working at Vranth House has given me the opportunity to develop my understanding and abilities to support children with physical difficulties. This in turn helps me to plan fun and exciting learning opportunities to help the children develop their own new skills and knowledge. All the children here are so keen to succeed and are always willing to try new things which I find very rewarding. I love trialling new activities and watching the children develop their new skills and enjoy themselves whilst they are doing this! Seeing the children happy and smiling is a very lucky reward that I have with my job!

I love working with the children in Class 1 and watching them grow over the years they are with us at Vranth House. It never fails to surprise me how much these children achieve during their time here with us! I am very lucky to have such a rewarding and enjoyable job.



**Michelle Woodgates**  
Teacher ~ Class 1  
Joined 2010

**TAMMY BROWN**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2005



Working at Vranth House since 2008 has been extremely rewarding. I currently have various job roles in Vranth House; a TA and MTA in Class 1 and a 1:1 in complete care. I feel very lucky to work within the team at Vranth and with all the inspiring children.



Reuben choosing his team's colours on Sports Day

**HELEN HOUSE**  
Teaching & Lunch-time  
Assistant  
Joined 2004



I work with the other staff helping the children reach their full potential in their learning, social and personal skills. I also help with some of the physiotherapy swimming sessions.

Each day is varied and brings something new. The children are great to work with and are full of fun.

**CHELSEA ARMSTRONG**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2010



I first came to Vranth House to do work experience during my studies. After completing my diploma in childcare, learning and development, I started volunteering as I enjoyed my placement at Vranth so much. I am now one of the teaching assistants in Class 1 and completing my Higher Level Teaching Assistant Course.





**Chloe Bond**  
**Teacher - Class 2**  
**Joined 2011**

I started working at Vranth House School after February half term 2011 and I was the teacher in Class 3 until September 2014. Now I am teaching Class 2. I trained as a primary teacher, specialising in PE, at The University of Plymouth for four years and graduated in July 2010. Since finishing University I have taught in local schools in and around Exeter, covering long term sickness and other supply. Whilst at University I completed my Foundation and enhancement workshops in Makaton sign language and gained other qualifications in coaching and teaching different sports. During the Summer holidays throughout my University years I worked in nurseries, holiday play schemes and I also spent nine weeks working at a school for children with severe and complex needs and visual impairments.

I am very happy to say I love my job working at Vranth House, and the children I teach are amazing making everyday exciting where I learn something new from them.



Imogen as 'Hello Kitty' at the Summer Fayre

**SANDRA SELLEY**  
**Teaching Assistant**  
**Joined 2007**



I started working here at Vranth House as a lunch-time assistant and I am now happily working full time as a teaching assistant. It's the children that make my job enjoyable and rewarding and I look forward to coming into work.

**RONNIE LYE**  
**Teaching Assistant**  
**Joined 1995**



Since I joined Vranth the school has seen many changes. The positive difference in each child however, can be subtle to dramatic but always wonderful to see. I have always felt very privileged to be part of that process. Personally I find it very rewarding being part of such a caring and intuitive team.



Reuben learning all about model aeroplanes





**Deborah Down**  
(Dee)  
Teacher ~ Class 2  
Joined 2002

I have been working at Vranth House since October 2002. Originally I was the class 1 nursery teacher but I have since been the teacher in class 2 and now I am the teacher in class 3. Previous to working at Vranth House I had experience working in a mainstream playgroup and I have also had ten years experience working as a nursing auxiliary across the hospitals in Exeter. I have a Post Graduate Certificate in Education and I am hoping to continue in my studies to gain a Masters in Education. I have had experience in all three classes at Vranth House and can honestly say I have enjoyed each new experience and the challenges that have come with it. I work with a fantastic multi-disciplinary team and truly inspirational pupils who work really hard to succeed in their daily challenges.

**JULIE LOBB**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2005



I have been at Vranth House since 2005 starting initially as a lunch-time assistant. I also ran the crèche on Wednesdays/Thursdays and helped out in the hydrotherapy pool until 2010. I now work as a teaching assistant and in 2012 I gained a diploma level 3 in children and young persons workforce. I have a particular interest in the visually impaired and I am involved in a couple of groups working with our children which I really enjoy. I am also a qualified first aider. It is a privilege to be working alongside a wonderful team and such inspiring children.



A whole school indoor Kurling tournament at the time of the Sochi Winter Olympics

**DEBBIE PROUT**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 1991



Although I have worked at Vranth House since 1991 and seen a lot of changes, the one thing that has remained constant is the children. They continue to delight and surprise me with their achievements. I believe that in this job we never stop learning. I feel very privileged to play a part in that process.



Playing boccia in our beautiful gardens



## Clinical Director's Report



*Ginny Humphreys  
Clinical Director  
Joined 1987*

The Vranth House clinical team across the county has continued to deliver low waiting times for patients with an extremely high level of recommendation using the Friends and Family Test and with no complaints.

The Physiotherapy team in Exeter has fully integrated across Honeylands and Vranth House providing, for the first time, a truly seamless service from 0-18 years. The referrals come into a central point administered at Vranth House and are allocated to any physiotherapist in the team although the most complex young children will continue to be seen by the Under five specialists at Honeylands. The result of this change to working practices is that the children with the highest need can be seen with virtually no wait while others wait on average up to about eight weeks or less. We

welcome Liz Hutcherson to the Physio team at Vranth while Hanna McFadden has moved to the Honeylands part of the team.

The North Devon Physiotherapy team continues to provide an excellent and personable local service to their families, dealing with high numbers of referrals. They also host and provide administration for the children's orthotic service on the same site.

The Physiotherapy teams at Ellen Tinkham, Mill Water, Southbrook, Pathfield and Lampard Vachell Special Schools provide an exceptional service under the often difficult circumstances of high pupil numbers and low number of available therapy hours. Physiotherapy input to ERADE continues to be contracted for and to be appreciated.

Occupational Therapy at Vranth House has undergone significant staff changes recently with the resignation of OT lead, Susan Mitchell, who has gone to academic pastures new. The opportunity allowed for the upgrading of one junior OT, Jenny Budd, and the employment of another, Lisa Stoner. Janelle Penfold has very ably taken on the lead role in OT outpatients. At the time of writing, average waiting times for OT are at a new all time low of eight weeks.

The CQUIN targets (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) were achieved by April 2014. We introduced the government's Friends and Family Test to Vranth House with fantastic results so far with upwards of 95% of families being 'Very Likely' to recommend our services and none less than 'Likely'. We also began Patient Reported Outcome Measures to provide evidence to Commissioners that our therapy services enabled children to make significant improvements in areas that mattered to them.

Our 'Fun Fit' county-wide service is still popular. Training to facilitate sustainability of the programme is now bought in by schools or individuals can attend sessions provided at Vranth House.

The Specialist Wheelchair Service continues to provide an uplift to the statutory service across the county for those who can demonstrate a definite need for extra equipment.

The specialist Alternative Augmentative Communication service is appreciated by children, families, community speech and language therapists and the advisory teaching services across Devon.

We've had change within our clinical admin team with the leaving of mainstay, Karen Sparks, and the arrival of Allie Alton-Vanderstay. Rebecca Wheeler takes up the lead post.

Collaboration in research remains an area of interest for the team and in the last 12 months we have taken part in studies investigating perceived exercise tolerance in teenagers with cerebral palsy, the effect of longer periods of standing in young children with cerebral palsy and the effects of sleeping in a sleep system in children with cerebral palsy.

We have had an exciting and successful year and my thanks go to my colleagues Kate Moss, Head of Therapies, Sally Bunney, North Devon Physiotherapy Lead, and the whole therapy team for their achievements.





## **KATE MOSS - Head of Therapies - Joined 2000**

I qualified as a Physiotherapist from Nottingham University in 1995 and have been working in Paediatrics since 1997. I have now completed just over a year as head of therapies.

As a therapy team we have had a very successful year, the wait for our outpatient assessments are now at an all time low. We have had a reshuffle of roles when vacancies have come up over the year and during this transition phase due to the drive and dedication of the team we have been able to maintain a high standard of therapy that we deliver.

My job is as exciting and fulfilling as the day I started as every day presents a new challenge. It continues to be a privilege to work with all the staff, children and families that I meet at Vranth House.



## **KATHRYN ESAU - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 1990**

I have now been back working at Vranth House Therapy Department for over a year since returning from a year's sabbatical in Peru.

I am again working with children who present with a variety of physical conditions. These conditions include cerebral palsy, idiopathic toe-walking, hypermobility syndrome, motor coordination difficulties, developmental difficulties, and problems with posture and walking. I also cover the physiotherapy needs of the students who attend Southbrook School in Exeter. I see the children either at their schools, homes or Vranth House clinics.

I continue to love working with the children, their families, school and support staff and my colleagues. I am constantly learning and feel privileged to work with such a good team.

## **LUCY WILLS - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined November 2009**



I am currently working with pupils at Vranth House School and children aged 0-19 years in the community and at mainstream educational settings to support their physical needs. I work closely with a number of professionals and services, including school staff, paediatricians, orthopaedic consultants, orthotics and wheelchair services, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and advisory teachers, as well as the individual children and their families. I continue to enjoy the

variety of work my caseload involves, and helping children to reach their full potential, which is very rewarding.



## **CHARLOTTE TYRRELL - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2012**

I have now been at Vranth House for two years and my role at Vranth has changed over the past two years. I no longer work directly with the school children and I currently have a full time outpatient caseload. My specialist area is working with children with chronic pain, musculoskeletal and orthopaedic problems but I also see children with Cerebral palsy and other common problems in children such as

co-ordination difficulties and gross motor delay. I enjoy how diverse and challenging my role is with each day being different.

## **LOUISA HETHERINGTON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2004**



I have been working with the Vranth House Therapy team since 2004. Since January 2012 I have been seconded to work at the Honeylands Specialist Child Assessment Centre. This involves working as part of a large multidisciplinary team, assessing and treating children aged 0-5. As part of my role, I have also recently started working on the Neonatal Unit at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. These are definitely the tiniest children I have had the privilege to be involved with.....and is an example of just how early 'early intervention' Physiotherapy can begin!





**JACKIE ROWE - Therapy Assistant - Joined 1989**

As a therapy assistant there are no boundaries, opportunities arise through the Therapy Team here at Vranth House to experience and be involved in new ventures. At the moment I help the Orthotist who comes into school and holds a clinic on a Monday. I enjoy this very much and am in awe of our feet quite an understated part of our body. I have also become involved with the new exciting fun-fit programme being rolled out across Devon. Working with Sarah Stone one of our North Devon physiotherapists, we deliver the training allowing staff in Primary Schools to help children with Developmental Co-ordination Delay. This ensuring they receive the help needed early. Both things are quite different from my every day role in school.



**ALLIE ALTON-VANDERSTAY - Therapies Administration Assistant - Joined 2014**

I started working at Vranth House in November 2014 as the Therapies Administration Assistant, working under Rebecca Wheeler. I have also taken on the clerical side of the Fun Fit training that is held here, which is great fun to organise and a really helpful tool for schools. I love administrative work, and to have the opportunity to be doing this as part of the Vranth team is wonderful. I am looking forward to many years here at Vranth House.



**HANNA McFADDEN - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2012**

I joined Vranth House in 2012 and am based at the Honeylands Child Assessment Centre which specialises in assessment and intervention for children aged 0-5. Honeylands runs specialist assessment and intervention groups for children with multidisciplinary needs and we also have an outpatient service, for children who have specific physical difficulties. In 2014 I completed my Bobath Neurodevelopmental training and have really enjoyed putting this into practise. It's great to be a part of the Vranth House Physiotherapy team and to have the support of a close network of therapists with such a diverse skill set.



**NICKY WHITE - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2010**

I qualified from Nottingham School of Physiotherapy in 1992. I worked at Airedale General Hospital, then St James' University Hospital in Leeds where I had the opportunity to specialise in Paediatrics. After a career break and four children, I returned to work at Vranth House. I have had a varied caseload since returning to practice. I love working with children and their families and enjoy being part of the supportive therapy team at Vranth.



**LIZ HUTCHERSON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2014**

I am one of the newer members of the therapy team and have been working at Vranth House since June 2014. My time is divided between managing an outpatient caseload and working with the children in school to assess and deliver a variety of physiotherapy interventions to meet their needs. This split role keeps me very busy and can be great fun when devising exciting ways to engage the school children in therapy sessions. I enjoy having the opportunity to work closely with families and colleagues to ensure the children receive the best possible service.



**REBECCA WHEELER - Clinical Administration Team Lead - Joined 2012**

I started work in the Vranth House Therapy Department at the beginning of 2012. I had some prior experience of the wonderful atmosphere at Vranth House via undertaking work experience and spending time as a volunteer here several times during previous years. I started my current role as Clinical Administration Team Lead in October 2014, and am enjoying the new challenges and responsibilities that the role brings. Interacting daily with the Vranth House School pupils, the Therapy Department outpatients, and the hard working and enthusiastic team of Vranth House staff, makes for a very enjoyable and rewarding workplace.





**STEVEN ROWE - Clerical Assistant - Physiotherapy Department - Joined 2000**

I was a pupil at V ranch House from 1978 until 1985. Since leaving I have maintained my association with the school through regular visits and also because my mother is a staff member.

In November 1998 I was asked if I would like to do some voluntary work for the physiotherapy department. Following a one month trial period, my voluntary work continued for nearly two years until, in February 2000, I was fortunate enough to have my position made permanent and I became employed as a part-time clerical assistant to the physiotherapy department on a Thursday afternoon.

I feel very lucky to have been given the opportunity to work at the school and to experience life in a busy working environment. I can now go into the Staff Room to eat my lunch and I don't even have to knock on the door to go in!



**HELEN HICKS - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2006**

I joined V ranch house in 2006 based at Ellen Tinkham School for seven years as a Therapy assistant. In the Spring of 2013 I was given the opportunity to be an assistant based within the v ranch therapy team, now with extra responsibilities in hydrotherapy with school children and outpatients.



**JO NG FONG TIAO - Physiotherapist - Joined 2013**

I have been part of the Therapy Team since 2013. Prior to starting at V ranch House, I was working for the NHS at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital on the junior rotations for two and half years. My role at V ranch House is working as part of the motor co-ordinations triage team where we assess children with difficulties with their gross and fine motor skills, I also have my own outpatient caseload to see

children who are in mainstream schools to assist in facilitating their exercise programmes and also giving advice to their teaching teams at school. We are here to support and assist these children to be as independent as possible in their school and home environment. I also work at the Exeter Royal Academy for the Deaf Education where I work with the school and college students in one to one settings and in group settings.

I love working with all the children and getting to know them and their families and seeing them get more confident in themselves with different activities. I really enjoy the variety my job involves and being able to work with such a great team.



**THE ELLEN TINKHAM TEAM**

- GILL SCOTT – Physiotherapist**
- CLARE HARRADINE – Technical Instructor**
- HANNAH REES – Physiotherapy Assistant**
- CARLY BUDD – Physiotherapy Assistant**

We work as part of the wider team of V ranch House based at Ellen Tinkham School. Ellen Tinkham is a special school

for children aged 3-19 years with severe learning difficulty (SLD), profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and complex needs. We provide rebound therapy, hydrotherapy, group work or individual programmes depending on the therapeutic need of each child. We assess and advise on any special equipment needed and review this on a regular basis. We liaise closely with educational staff as well as our occupational therapy and speech therapy colleagues based at Ellen Tinkham.

Gill Scott also provides physiotherapy including rebound therapy and hydrotherapy at Mill Water School at Bicton.



# North Devon Community Children's Physiotherapy Service 2015

Vranch's North Devon Children's Physiotherapy Team is based in Barnstaple at the Health Centre.

The team in North Devon comprises of three WTE Physiotherapy posts shared between four, with a further fulltime post covered by our Clinical Administrator Michelle Yandell and Therapy Assistant Charlotte Thomas.

Sadly this spring we will be losing a valuable colleague and friend, Physiotherapist Ellie Waugh-Baker, as she moves away due to her husband's work. However we will endeavour to cover her skills and caseload while we look for a replacement. For such a petite person, she will leave 'large boots to fill'!

Within the team, individuals have developed specific roles allowing the service to practice and offer a high level of evidence based care to children and their families.



(Back l-r) Rob Shaw, Sarah Stone, Charlotte Grigg & Ellie Waugh-Baker. (Front l-r) Michelle Yandell and Sally Bunney.

**Sally Bunney Lead Physiotherapist** - Started working in North Devon for Vranch in 1991, initially as a locum, before securing a permanent post in 1996.

Sally is the Team Lead for children under 5, offering neurological assessment for babies on the Special Care Baby Unit at North Devon District Hospital. She has a particular interest in the use of interventions for the young child with Hemiplegia. These include the use of Therapeutic Taping, Constraint-Induced Movement Therapy (CIMT), Hand-Arm Bimanual Intensive Therapy (HABIT) and Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES).

Sally has developed an Outcome Measure Library for the team, with the aim of allowing the Physiotherapists to effectively evaluate treatment interventions.

**Rob Shaw Physiotherapist** - Joined the North Devon team in 2005. In the team he is responsible for coordinating the weekly Referrals. In addition, he is the Team Lead for advice regarding Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy, Botulinum Toxin Therapy - being a joint author of the APCP (Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists) National Guidelines on 'The Use of Botulinum Toxin in Children with Neurological Conditions' (April 2008), Haemophilia, Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, and coordinating the Physiotherapy Undergraduate Student Placements for our team.

Rob has a particular interest in access to disability sport and advises Physiotherapists, children and families on the availability of local sport.

**Sarah Stone Physiotherapist** - Sarah has worked with the North Devon Children's physiotherapy team since November 2004. She is the Team Lead for Postural Management, Lead Physiotherapist in Pathfield Special School, Fun Fit Programme Coordinator for Devon, and coordinates the Wheelchair Clinics for Children at Pathfield.

In addition, Sarah represents the North Devon Team at the South West Neuromuscular Network Meetings.

**Ellie Waugh-Baker Physiotherapist** - Ellie has been working in the team since 2013. The specific roles and skills she has developed have been highly valuable. 2015, will lead us to explore how we cover her leaving and develop within the team to ensure our service remains highly skilled and proactive.

Ellie has a special interest in musculoskeletal conditions and has been the Team Lead in this area, plus the 'Developmental Co-ordination Disorder Clinics'. She has managed the In Service Training and Journal Club for the Team, helping us to remain up to date with evidence based clinical practice.

Part of the week Ellie has worked in Pathfield Special School where she has been responsible the younger age groups and helping to managed the termly wheelchair clinics.



**Charlotte Thomas Therapy Assistant** - Charlotte qualified as a Nursery Nurse before working as a volunteer at Highfield House Specialist Child Assessment Centre before being offered a post as a Therapy Assistant with the Children's Physiotherapy Team at Barnstaple. For the last eight years Charlotte has worked at Pathfield Special School thirty hours a week, running all Hydrotherapy sessions, Physiotherapy groups, including individual one to one sessions in all classes from Nursery to Key Stage 4. Charlotte is able to help set up and monitor specialist children's equipment such as standing frames, lying supports and walkers.

Outside of her work with the Children's Physiotherapy Team, she helps run the North Devon Siblings Club. This is a club for children and young people who have a sibling with special needs. Monthly groups and days out to various adventure parks, cinema trips etc. are organised.

**Michell Yandell Administrator** - Michelle joined the team in April 2011 as Clinical Administrator having originally trained as a Nursery Nurse. As Administrator, Michelle has updated and introduced new systems to improve the administration support to the Physiotherapy Team. She provides the 'front line' desk for the service, greeting parents and children, answering telephone calls, processing all Physiotherapy and Orthotic referrals and discharges, and gathering information to ensure all contact details on the Databases are accurate. Monthly statistics are provided to Vbranch to monitor service activity levels and waiting times.

In addition Michelle works alongside the Orthotist in weekly clinics held at Pathfield School and the Children's Physiotherapy Department. She helps the Orthotist to manage the children during fittings and castings, recording appointments into the Hospital Patient Archive System and ensuring all appliances are processed for fitting during clinics or sent onto North Devon surgeries for collection by parents.

The team provide treatment and advice in a number of different settings depending on the need, such as;

- Barnstaple Health Centre Outpatient Department
- Home, where the child is too fragile to travel or where equipment requires setting up or monitoring
- Within Mainstream School/Nursery settings
- Special Schools
- Highfield Specialist Child Assessment Centre
- Venues where joint assessments are arranged with other professionals and parents/carers
- Outpatient Clinics held at Torrington and Holsworthy Hospitals for the convenience of families
- North Devon District Hospital Children's ward and Special Care Baby Unit where a child has been referred for neurological assessment and training for staff

Joint clinics with Exeter Mobility Centre, the Wheelchair Service (EMC), are held in the Physiotherapy Department at Barnstaple Health Centre, and at Pathfield Special School on a termly basis. This allows families to be seen with their Physiotherapist in a local setting their child is familiar with, and is additional to the monthly clinics EMC provide at Barnstaple and Bideford Hospitals and in Exeter.

A wide variety of conditions are treated such as;

- Neurological - Cerebral Palsy
- Neuromuscular – Muscular Dystrophy, SMA
- Congenital – Spina Bifida
- Developmental Coordination Disorders
- Developmental Delay
- Postural and gait Abnormalities (including Hypermobility and Musculo-skeletal conditions) – in the young child (ie primary school age)

Referrals are accepted from a variety of professional sources with parents and carers having open access to our service for advice.

We work as part of a multidisciplinary team, making parents, carers and children feel central to our service.



## The Nurses



**RUTH WHITHORN**  
Nurse - Joined 1983

Every child at Vranth House is unique. They have individual and sometimes complex health needs. Vranth House nurses aim to build a good link with a child's family and the multidisciplinary team involved in their care. We always listen to parents/carers so we can work together to maintain a high standard of care. We want children here to feel safe and secure in the knowledge they will always be treated with respect and dignity.

Some of our daily tasks include:

- Gastrostomy feeds and stoma care working with the Community Dieticians who have a clinic here every three months.
- Working with and sharing information with Paediatric Consultants who have clinics at Vranth House most weeks. Including the Orthopaedic Surgeon and other specialist teams.
- Seizure management - Each child has an emergency protocol and is reviewed by a Paediatrician and also has advice from the hospital Epilepsy Nurse.
- Catheterisation
- Tracheostomy care including ventilation
- Oxygen therapy
- Monitoring general health and well-being

Team working is essential for the continuation of care and our support to families.

People that come into school are:

- Paediatricians

- Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Children's Community Nurses
- TAs from Mainstream Schools
- Orthoptist and Optician
- Audiology Team
- Bladder and Bowel Specialist Nurse
- Dentist - examination only and treatment discussed



25 years at Vranth!

I extend a very warm welcome to my colleague, Marie Brown, who has been with us for only a short time but has already brought a breath of fresh air to our work. Lastly I mention that for several years Vranth House have welcomed Medical Students from our local hospital into School; visiting some children for a few hours a week as part of their medical training. This has been very successful.



**MARIE BROWN**  
Nurse - Joined 2014

I have been made to feel so welcome at Vranth House School and am fortunate to be part of such a skilled and dynamic team.

It is a real privilege getting to know such amazing children and engage with their families. It is my aim to provide ongoing support, offering advice and information with an informal and friendly approach.



*Nick McIntosh*  
Orthotist

## Orthotics

Orthotics is the branch of medical science dealing with the rehabilitation of injured or weakened joints or muscles through artificial or mechanical support by orthoses or what used to be called orthopaedic appliances, for example Ankle Foot Orthoses. The meaning comes from 'orthos', the Greek for straight.

We take a plaster cast of the limb, arm or torso - whichever part needs support and make the orthosis using the cast to give an accurate fit. This is worn either all day, just part of it or during the night.

Muscle and bone grow at different rates and the tendons can sometimes get very tight. When there's spasticity (stiffness) in the muscle it can pull the joints into awkward positions and reduce the amount of motion. We are trying to maintain the length of the tendons so that the joints can work properly. Intervention while the child is growing is very important. Outpatients are seen three or four times a year and the pupils in school more regularly. The children have to be monitored as they grow.



# Occupational Therapy



**JANELLE PENFOLD**  
**Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2012**

A great deal has happened since I joined Vbranch House in 2012, since September 2014 I have been asked to lead the occupational therapy team. This is a wonderful opportunity for me and I'm really enjoying my new role. In September we welcomed a fantastic new occupational therapist Lisa who has fitted very well into our team and has done remarkably well in taking on a challenging caseload.

The occupational therapy team continues to develop and we are currently looking at promoting new outpatient groups to run alongside the traditional handwriting group. Therapy continues to be very personal to each child, focusing very much on what skills they would like to improve and working alongside the child, their family and school to set goals in a practical way. We strive to make each child feel valued by very much listening to which daily activities are important to them and thus helping them with solutions.

Whilst two members of our team provide occupational therapy for Vbranch school children I continue to see children in outpatient clinics and quite often visit children within their school environment to provide advice and establish rapport with staff who know the child. Working at Vbranch House continues to be rewarding and I am looking forward to all of the new opportunities ahead with our newly established OT team.



**LISA STONER**  
**Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2014**

I qualified from the University of Southampton in 2009 with a BSC (Hons) degree in Occupational Therapy.

Upon qualifying I worked for the first two years of my career within elderly care for Hampshire County Council. Working within a community team we promoted independence with a view to prevent hospital admissions. In 2012 my family and I moved back to Devon and having always wanted to specialise in Paediatrics I accepted my first paediatric role within a school for deaf children.

In September 2014 I was extremely happy to be given the opportunity to join Vbranch House and I feel privileged to be able to work with such a friendly and supportive team. My role at

Vbranch house involves working with outpatients which I thoroughly enjoy.

# Specialist Wheelchair Service



**CLARE WEBBER - Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2003**

I am the therapist for the Specialist Wheelchair Service run by Vbranch House on behalf of the Commissioners. This service enhances the existing service for children and young people, where it has been agreed that their needs cannot be fully met by the mainstream (NHS) service. The criteria for application are:

- There is an identified need for a powered wheelchair and a specialist manual wheelchair, but Mobility Centres only agree to supply one wheelchair
- There is an identified need for a specialist wheelchair to facilitate access to the full education curriculum
- There is a difference of opinion between parents and Mobility Centres regarding the model of wheelchair that meets the 'identified need'.

All referrals are through the Specialist Wheelchair Panel, via the child or young person's therapist.

I will contact the family, assess the child's needs and abilities at home and at school, and consider their mobility requirements for education, leisure and social activities. I then work with the child, the family, the school and the child's community therapists to find the most appropriate wheelchair to meet the needs. I liaise with the statutory wheelchair services (often the child will have a 'wheelchair voucher' from them) as well as local and national charities to agree funding. All funding offered by the Specialist Wheelchair Service is agreed by the Panel.

Parents' and children's feedback is invited, and I hope that this service will continue to develop alongside statutory services to provide children with wheelchairs which will enhance their participation in all aspects of their lives.

I work three days each week. I am also one of the OTs working with children in Vbranch House School, I am a Moving and Handling trainer for Vbranch House, I take part in Postural Management training for parents and carers, and I sometimes also see children referred to the Outpatient Motor Coordination therapy service.







# Speech and Language Therapy Report 2013-14

a b c d e f g h i j k l m

Please don't keep on.	past	future	opposite		not	+ ing	
I'm joking	I'm sorry	where	I/me Matty	he, him	is	feel	wait
I don't know	please	why	Mum	she, her	am	wash	write
I'm telling the truth	Hello	what	Dad	it	are	play	sit
It's not on my board	Goodbye	who	Laura	you	was	help	ride
I'm lying.	first	when	man	we, us	were	work	drive
I don't understand	before	how	boy	they, them	have	music	read
I want to talk about something else now	after	afternoon	girl	Speech and Language	had	do	hug
talking book please	day	today	teacher	Physio	has	want	like
may I go to the toilet	night	tomorrow	friend	helper	maybe	draw	love
	about					paint	sleep



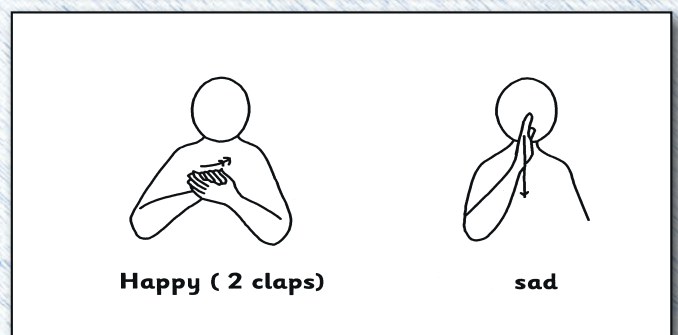
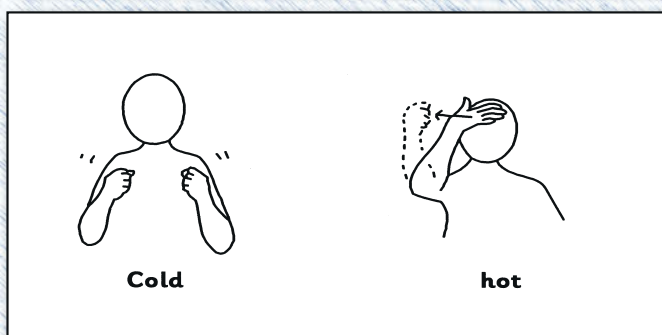
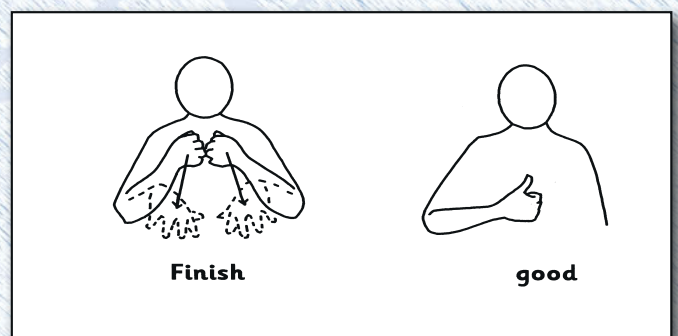
Everyone at Vbranch continues to work hard to develop the children's communication skills, creating opportunities for them to communicate, socialise, make choices, and express themselves throughout the day. We continue to use a 'Total Communication' approach throughout the school day, with staff using whatever methods of communication are most effective for each child. This includes objects of reference, signing, symbols, photos, eye-pointing, and a variety of communication aids.

2014 has been the year of the VOCA (Voice Output Communication Aid) at Vbranch. We have been very fortunate to have several of our pupils be provided with a VOCA through charitable funding, and/or through the new NHS England funding for a Specialised AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication) service. We have also been finding some in-house solutions to support our pupils with AAC: using classroom iPads, trialling our learning resource eye-gaze computer, and using a selection of VOCAs (SuperTalker, Big Mack) from our supply. We are looking forward to further support from the specialist hub in accessing equipment and software to meet the communication needs of Vbranch House pupils. To read more about the funding from NHS England, see the Communication Matters website: [www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/aac-commissioning-England](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/aac-commissioning-England).



**Katie McCaughey**  
Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist AAC Service  
Joined 2012

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication Service (AAC) has now been operating for two and a half years. The service offers assessment and support to children and young people across Devon who attend mainstream educational setting but who have an identified need for AAC to support their communication.





## Lunchtime Assistants



**DAWN STREET**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 1999

I work at Vranth House in the kitchen and in class as a lunchtime assistant. I really enjoy coming into class and helping the children. It is nice getting to know them all. After lunch we go back to class. I love this time with the children and have learnt how special they all are and what different needs they all have. This is a lovely place to work, staff and children are great and I love coming to work every day.



**GEORGINA MORTIMER**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2008

I started working at Vranth House in September 2008. I help in the class at lunchtimes everyday, I also help in therapy groups and most recently I have started doing some one to one work with a couple of the children in the school which I enjoy very much. I love working with all the children in Vranth House, no two days are the same but they are very rewarding.



**MICHALA SMITH**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2010

I work in the classes at lunchtimes and also help with swimming sessions. I enjoy my work so very much at Vranth. The staff are very friendly and working with the children is very rewarding.



**KAREN FINN**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2013

I joined Vranth House as a lunchtime assistant in November 2013. The staff have made me feel very welcomed and it is a pleasure being around the children.



**CATHERINE BAYFIELD**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2014

My name is Catherine and I recently joined Vranth House as a lunchtime assistant. I'm working with the Class 3 children who have been a pleasure to get to know. Each day is different and it has been rewarding to return to this work after a break.



**KATE PAGE**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2014

I first started work at Vranth House as a swimming volunteer and am now also a lunchtime assistant. The children are amazing, every day is different and bulging with personalities.



**RACHEL HARRISON**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2013

I started working at Vranth House in December 2013 as a lunch-time assistant. Coming to work every day is enjoyable and getting to know the children is rewarding.



**LORRAINE CHAPMAN**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 1993

I work in class 3 as a lunchtime assistant. I find my job rewarding and enjoy coming in each day and helping the children.



**CHARLOTTE DAVEY**  
Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 2012

I started working at Vranth House in May 2012 as a lunchtime assistant and had a really nice welcome from everyone. I enjoy coming to work everyday getting to know the children and assisting them at meal times and in class.



**DI STAVES**  
Relief Lunchtime Assistant  
Joined 1987

I started work at Vranth House as a Lunchtime Assistant in 1987. During this time I also volunteered my help in the Hydrotherapy pool, which resulted with the first of several Halliwick Swimming Courses. I moved to the Therapy Department when a position became available providing cover for hydrotherapy sessions and other therapy activities, gaining experience with school pupils and outpatients. Since retiring in the Spring of 2013 I have maintained my contact with the children and staff by providing relief cover when required as a lunch-time assistant.



**DI BROOKING**  
Relief Assistant  
Joined 1982

I decided to retire from work at Vranth House in July 2008 but be available as a voluntary swimming helper and as a relief if required. It is lovely seeing all the children from Class 1, when they are learning to adapt to school and all the changes, right through to Class 3 when they are experienced in school life and all its opportunities. I will continue to help Vranth in all capacities when-ever I can.

## Kitchen Staff

Lunches are delivered from the hospital. We then sort them out for the children, some of them need to be mashed, others need cutting up, some have special diets. We get it all ready then they come into the hall for lunch. We really love our work.





# Various Roles



## **Adrian Chown - Technician – Joined 1995**

To do my job I need to be a jack of all trades and master of none. Unfortunately for Vranth House I am neither and I am afraid they are stuck with me. I call myself Billy Bodger. I make/adapt/repair things for the children/teachers/support staff/physios/occupational therapists/dinner ladies, etc.

The type of job that gives me the greatest satisfaction is when I am asked to make something (but they don't know what) that will do a specific task, or fulfil a certain function. This means that I have to employ the old grey cells to design and subsequently make a piece of equipment (that all sounds a bit grand but you know what I mean) to do the job. As the children's needs are constantly changing it is important that turn around time for anything I make is kept to a minimum i.e. whatever I make has to work but does not necessarily need to look pretty (bit like me really).

There is so much care and goodwill at Vranth House but I think they are lucky to have me here to add a touch of balance and reality. After all every school needs a grumpy old man. I joined Vranth House on the 1/4/95 'April Fool's Day'. I think that says it all.

Over the years I have obviously become more efficient, as I now only have to work three mornings to achieve what used to take me five mornings. So at this rate I should be able to retire when I reach 83 years.

## **Simon Batstone - Groundsman/Technician - Joined 2011**

Having spent twenty-eight years at Vranth House as a subcontractor groundsman, in 2011 I had the pleasure of being offered a full time job as Groundsman/Technician at the school. It is a pleasure to work in such a caring environment with the children's needs at heart.



## **Tom Warren - Mobility Project Manager and resident Engineer - Joined 2005**

I have run the Guided Mobility Project for twenty-one years now, working at Vranth House since 1999. This project has designed and developed a 'robotic' wheelchair system which has now been installed in over a hundred educational and healthcare establishments in the UK. This 'tracking system' primarily allows an adapted powered wheelchair or custom built platform to automatically follow a safe, predetermined route controlled by a single switch, which allows a child to experience independence

and potentially develop mobility skills, and has proven to provide a powerful motivation for learning in many cases.

In recent years my role at Vranth House has changed significantly. In the simplest terms this has involved taking technical work that has historically been done for us by outside companies and developing the capacity to manage as much as possible 'in-house'. This includes the website, network, IT support, environmental control, hydrotherapy support and plant, signage, mobility, communication, electronic hardware repair, manufacturing of custom parts, switching, software and programming, and security. I work in conjunction and co-operation with my colleagues' similar support work and hopefully our efforts much benefit the smooth operation of Vranth House.



## **Phil Gater - Technical Assistant**

I have been involved with the Centre since 1972 when I started organising the PA system for the annual fêtes and fayres. My role now is that of technical assistant doing electric repairs, installations and IT work (including trouble shooting problems with computers, installing software, fixing toys, etc.).

Some of the projects that I have managed have included the Sensory Room, the installation of a sixty inch TV and two touch screens in the Board Room and new information screen in the foyer. I have also fitted a webcam to a bird box so that the children and staff could watch events unfold and have on record baby blue tits born in the summer half term and a webcam outside the school building which captured a fox running around the grounds - perhaps we should call this our 'Foxcam'.



*Doug Steer  
Caretaker -  
Joined 1978*



## Marketing Manager's Report



Paul Munro and Jeremy Bodley-Tickell made it to Australia and back breaking the record for the most miles covered!



Sisters on the run - Kath Gibbons, Aimee Williams, Lesley Bretton and Catherine Cortney escaped to the Isle of Man.



Sharon and Tony Rowe present Vrach House with a brand new car which is used by our clinical staff when visiting our pupils and patients in their mainstream schools and community

Zach Kirby for raising £1,669.70 for undertaking a Skydive at the nearby Dunkeswell Airfield!



### Andrew Barge Marketing Manager

This year has been another fantastic year for Vrach House. There are a number of people and organisations that I would like to thank for their support of the charity during the financial year 2013-14.

- The Management, staff and parents for supporting the various fund raising events throughout the year.
- The Exeter Foundation, Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club and Wooden Spoon for their continued support and generosity
- Tony Rowe from South West Communications for his very generous donation of a brand new car which will be used by our clinical staff supporting our pupils and patients out in the community
- The various companies that have helped raise money for us over the year, some of whom are mentioned below.
- The local media for their coverage and help with awareness raising.
- Our wonderful pupils and patients who feature in so many of our photographs that you see in this publication and around the school.
- The Governor of Dartmoor Prison for giving us permission to hold the Jailbreak each April – an event which has raised in excess of £625,000 since 1984.
- The many 'escapees' who take part annually.
- The hundreds of companies, organisations and individuals worldwide who help these participants by providing free transport, accommodation and sponsorship.
- Waitrose and John Lewis for donating £295 and £1,240 respectively through their Community Matters programs.
- Warburtons PLC for their donation of £1,000 which helped us redevelop the playroom at Vrach House.
- Zach Kirby for raising £1,669.70 for undertaking a Skydive at the nearby Dunkeswell Airfield!
- Mark Westaway for raising £1,000 for Vrach House by swimming 10.5 miles in Lake Windermere

Vrach House is a fantastic place to work, with wonderful, staff, pupils and patients and we're all thankful to our many generous supporters.



# Fact Sheet

## What is Vranch House?

An Independent Day School in Exeter for children with significant physical difficulties, mostly with cerebral palsy. A Centre for the treatment of outpatients with all forms of physical difficulties.

A provider of various therapies in other schools in Devon.

In North and East Devon we are the principal provider of paediatric therapy to all children with physical difficulties and the major provider of therapies for children with cerebral palsy.

## Who owns and runs it?

Vranch House School, a registered charity, number 1002700, which started in 1960. The school opened in 1969.

## How many children do you help?

We have day places for up to 28 children and treat a further 1,200 outpatients each year.

## What ages are they?

Pupils are aged from 2 to 12 years, outpatients are mostly under 17 years.

## What problems do they have?

Pupils all have significant physical difficulties, most have cerebral palsy (spasticity). Outpatients have a wider range of conditions, some comparatively mild.

## What causes cerebral palsy?

It is caused by an injury or malformation to the part of the brain that controls movement, this injury often occurs at the time of birth.

## What are its effects?

Messages from the brain get jumbled up on route to the muscles, causing stiffness, jerky or unwanted movements. This makes it hard, sometimes impossible for children to walk, use their hands and speak.

## Can cerebral palsy be cured?

No, but its effects can be greatly reduced by appropriate treatment at an early age.

## Do the children have other problems?

Yes, many do. They include:

- \* Learning difficulties
- \* Speech & language difficulties
- \* Problems with sight & hearing
- \* Feeding & swallowing difficulties
- \* Emotional & behavioural difficulties

## What treatment do you provide?

Teaching is integrated with intensive yet sensitive physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, occupational therapy and speech & language therapy.

## What services do you provide outside the school?

Our physiotherapists treat pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools and specific special schools in Devon. A team of 4 physiotherapists operate exclusively in North Devon.

We have a growing number of innovative projects in the community, many in partnership with bodies such as schools, universities, Community Trusts and Health, Education and Social Services.

## Opportunity Technology Centre

Optech is a new centre to provide assessment, review and training programmes for computer access to the curriculum, early mobility, multi-sensory activities, communication and toys and play.

## Who provides funds?

No fees are charged to parents. The Local Education Authority provides funds for basic schooling and the Health Authorities provide core funding for salaries for our professional staff.

We supplement this funding by 40% of the total cost to give the finest education and treatment possible. The buildings, contents, running costs and equipment of the school are our responsibility.

## What does Ofsted think of you?

Our last Ofsted report in May 2012 said: "Vranch House School provides a good quality of education. The outstanding quality of welfare, health and safety of pupils, including safeguarding, and the outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. A good curriculum, supported by good teaching and assessment, results in pupils making good progress in improving academically and in attending school. The school is particularly successful in achieving its aim to ensure almost all pupils receive part of their education in a mainstream school."



Caitlin in the hydrotherapy pool.





## Vranch House

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