



Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2014 - 2015



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 2014 - 2015

Board of the Society

Chairman:	Julia Tolman-May
Vice Chairman:	Mr A Griffin
	Mr Clive Rendle
	Mrs C Tailford
	Mrs A Ballman (to 25/11/14)
	Dr G Humphreys ⁺
	Col G Wheeler ⁺⁺
	Mrs S Mathieson
	Miss P Hale
	Miss V Pavlics ⁺
	Mr W Richards
	Mrs R Pavitt
	Ms K Moss
	Miss M Boon (from 25/11/14)

⁺Ex Officio Members
⁺⁺Secretary

The persons listed above, less the ex-officio members, were the appointed Trustees and Directors of the Society for the 2014 - 2015 Financial Year

Board of Governors

Chairman:	Julia Tolman-May
Vice Chairman:	Mr A Griffin
Secretary:	Col G Wheeler

Ms K Moss⁺⁺
Miss V Pavlics⁺
Mrs M Wood⁻
Mrs R Lye⁻
Mr S Algarny⁻
Miss S Williams⁻
Miss S Tutinas

⁻Staff Representative
⁻Parent Governors
⁺Head Teacher
⁺⁺Head of Therapies

Management Committee

Chairman:	Mrs J Tolman-May
	Miss V Pavlics ⁺
	Col G Wheeler
	Ms K Moss

Principal Staff

Chief Executive	Colonel G F Wheeler MPhil., CGIA
Head Teacher	Miss V Pavlics M.Ed (SEN)
Head of Therapies	Ms K Moss BSc (Hons), MCSP

Consulting Physicians

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

Orthotist

Nina Darke
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

Faith	- Class 1
Maddie (<i>in pool</i>)	- Class 2
Josh	- Class 2

Printed by **Hedgerow Print Ltd**

01363 777595

www.hedgerowprint.co.uk

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2015 AGM

I will make this report, my third as your Chairman, as brief as the complex business it relates will allow!

As we will see later there has been some unavoidable turbulence in our senior staff. Two therapists left our North Devon team and three left Vranth House for domestic or career reasons. Dr Susan Mitchell who had been with us for twelve years has gone back into academic work having contributed with great distinction to our Occupational Therapy work. Clare Webber had worked for us for thirteen years and ended her time with us as our Wheelchair expert because she wanted to explore other professional opportunities. It is always a sad thing when employees leave us because they always give so much to the charity and become friends in all our day-to-day working lives. That said, and it is said with sincerity, we are very lucky in the calibre of the new younger generation of staff who we have found to replace them. At this point I would like to mention a remarkable employee and a friend to all the staff, Mrs Jackie Rowe. Jackie had worked for the charity for twenty-six years and right up to April this year was part of our training team for FunFit – the program run in schools to help children with gross motor difficulties. In April Jackie was diagnosed with cancer and sadly died in October. It is right that you should know that your charity supported the family with the first payment of a cash sum from our Death in Service benefit.

I think you would like to hear that we value our staff so greatly that we became, as far as we know, the first employer in the South West to pay the National Living Wage set for April 2016 – and to exceed it by nearly 9%.

Our Financial performance remained strong this year despite the fact that income has remained stubbornly difficult to develop. Our Chief Executive will report on the details but I understand that by some financial wizardry costs have been controlled with no loss to service quality – in fact in such a way that life for the staff and children has continued much as always.

In late July, just two weeks before the end of term, we had a snap Ofsted inspection. I am delighted to tell you that in the six areas that were inspected, the school was graded with four “goods” (the second highest grading) and two “outstandings” (the highest). The overall grading is “good” which means we do not – for the 5th inspection in a row – have to send a remedial report to the Department for Education and we will have the longest possible interval before the next inspection (three years).

At this point I have to tell you that our excellent Head Teacher, Viktoria Pavlics had been quietly shouldering an enormous burden and the strain of this inspection proved too great to sustain. In the interests of her health and of her young family she asked to resign. We have much to thank Viktoria for. Although her time as Head Teacher was short she invented a novel timetable for delivery of the curriculum which was much admired by Ofsted. We worked rapidly to fill this important post and have appointed Pearl Barnes – an ex Chairman and President of the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN). Pearl started work on a one-day a week “read-in” basis in October and will commence her executive work and take her place on the Management Team in January. In the meantime we owe a great debt to Kate Moss, our Head of Therapies, who has continued in her main occupation of managing our therapy teams whilst simultaneously looking after the School – which hasn't missed a beat in all that it does!

I am sure you would all wish to join me in thanking our outstanding staff for delivering yet another year of high-quality work. In every area of what we do, all the services have exceeded the national performance standards set for them. This is a truly remarkable achievement and we should be proud of it.



*Chairman
Julia Tolman-May*

Julia Tolman-May
Chairman

Annual Trustees' Report

Report of the Board of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2015

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity Name

The Devon & Exeter Spastics Society

(Working Title): Vbranch House

Charity Registration Number: 1002700

Company Registration Number: 02599511

Registered Office and Operational Address:

Vbranch 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

Mrs J Tolman-May	Chairman
Mr A J Griffin	Vice Chairman
Mrs A Ballman	to 25 November 2014
Miss M Boon	from 25 November 2014
Miss P Hale	
Mrs S Mathieson	
Mr W Richards	
Mrs C Tailford	
Mrs R Pavitt	
Mr C Rendle	

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

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

Mrs Kate Moss (ex officio as Head of Therapies with no vote)

Miss V Pavlics (ex officio as Head Teacher with no vote)

Company Secretary & Chief Executive

Colonel G Wheeler

Board of Governors

Mrs J Tolman-May	Chairman
Mr A J Griffin	Vice Chairman
Col G Wheeler	Secretary
Miss V Pavlics	Head Teacher
Mrs K Moss	Head of Therapies
Miss V Parsons	Staff member
Mrs M Wood	Parent Governor

Mr S Algarny Parent Governor

Miss S Williams Parent Governor

Management Committee

Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman

Col G Wheeler

Mrs K Moss

Miss V Pavlics

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

The organisation is a Company 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 73 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 12 between the minimum of 8 and maximum of 16 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 2 to 12 at Vranth House School and the provision of paediatric therapies 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 50% of the total cost of the services it provides to the North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW CCG) 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 NEW CCG 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 1996, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2015 (detail of the latest inspection is outside the scope of this report).

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 will provide for normal maintenance and some improvement of the main Vranth House building whilst building reserves for the re-build of the Hydrotherapy Pool.

The high quality of service delivery has been maintained despite an increase of 40% in the number of out patient referrals and an increase in the number of school pupils placed in the school with complex needs. There was an average of 23 children on the school roll and over 2,300 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 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 12 weeks against a national target of 18 weeks, all service development targets were met in the year under review and the poll of out-patient opinion shows that over 98% of our referrals place Vranth House in the top category, 1.2% 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. The amalgamation of the Honeylands physiotherapy service with that of Vranth House is now complete and has delivered dramatic improvements. A radical review of how the curriculum is delivered at Vranth House School conducted by the Head Teacher offers 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 NEW CCG has operated since the 1st of April 2011. The Agreement set a target for charitable investment in these statutory services of no more than 35% of the total cost. The total contract value has not increased for 8 years despite considerable inflation in both the numbers and complexity of referrals made to the charity so that our contribution is now more than 50%. Our partners recognise the significantly increased burden we have carried and we are now actively engaged in a process to increase the contract value to an amount that reduces the contribution to the contracted level.

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 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 continuation of the 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;

Income Growth The next five years are likely to include a period of between 2 and 3 years in which national fiscal disciplines and retrenchment in public service investment continues. Despite this the charity

is in discussion with its statutory partners to develop income commensurate with the service improvements we have demonstrated over the last 8 years. We will define a Core Offer for the school which reflects the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) process, allows for use of the Devon Assessment Framework and enables Educational, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This should allow for an adjustment of the education component of the Agreement. As a result of these initiatives the Trustees believe that the charity will avoid structural imbalances between its service commitments and the funding it receives for them.

Income Security The combined contract is non-competitive because of the high amount of public benefit developed by it (now around 50% of the true costs of the statutory services provided by the charity is funded by the charity). The contract has a 25 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.

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 2015 of £1,630,594 (£1,631,559 in 2014), a small decrease of £965. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,311,460 (£1,294,337 in 2014). This increase of £17,123 is the product of small variations in debtors, creditors and cash balances. The Society has Net Assets amounting to £5,998,880 (£6,067,846) the reduction of £68,966 being the net movement in funds between the year under audit and the last. The Vranth House site and buildings were last valued four years ago at £4.8m and a re-valuation for the next Financial Year will be required. Adding back depreciation of £124,454 (a non monetary expense), the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £55,488 (£33,242 last year).

Important transactions in the year include the contract income of £1,385,839 from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from charitable and all other sources was

£244,755. The nominal leasehold annual rent at mid-range for a property like Vbranch House is in the order of £431,000. 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 2008.

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 consonant 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

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and financial statements in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. 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.
- (d) Observe the methods and principles laid out in

the applicable SORP for registered charities.

(e) State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

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 11th of November 2015 and signed on its behalf.

J Tolman-May

Chairman

November 2015

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 2015

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2014 – 2015 Financial Year. The headline financial news is included in the report of the Directors and Trustees but the following financial information is worth highlighting:

- Income declined slightly by £965 from £1,631,559 to £1,630,594 but Debtors increased by £5,689 from £25,962 to £31,651 simply because capital project pre-payments were slightly more. These trends are not significant.
- Net Current Assets increased by £17,123 from £1,294,337 to £1,311,460. Total Funds now stand at £5,998,880.
- Tangible Fixed Assets dropped with depreciation by £86,089 from £4,773,509 to £4,687,420. 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.
- With Depreciation carried as a non-monetary expense the charity made an operating loss of £68,966 but with Depreciation discounted a net cash surplus of £55,488 was generated (£33,242 last year).
- It is a commendable reflection of internal fiscal controls that total expended resources decreased in the year under audit by £40,220.
- 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 2015). 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 54% 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 2016 we are embarking on what will be a ninth 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 and work is in hand to redress the imbalance. The Trustees have approved a £0.4m investment to replace the hydrotherapy pool building and plant in the period of January to May 2016.

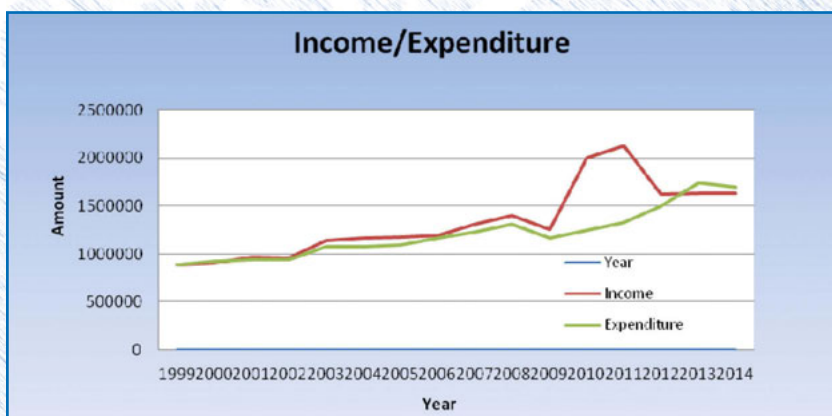
Colonel Graeme Wheeler
Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account	2015	2014	2013
Gross Income	£1,630,594	£1,631,559	£1,620,685
Gross Expenditure	£1,699,560	£1,739,780	£1,623,075
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	£-68,966	£-108,221	£-2,390
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£55,488	£119,784	£123,795

Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2015	2014	2013	2012
Total Funds	0.53%	0.43%	0.70%	1.00%
Creditors as a Percentage of:				
Net Current Assets	5.00%	11.80%	7.60%	7.50%
As a Percentage of Total Funds				
Profit/Loss for the Year	0.90%	1.98%	2.0%	13.50%
Revenue Costs	3.80%	6.90%	7.7%	3.00%

Notes: 1. Profit is shown net of depreciation.



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

2. The Auditor's Report for 2014/15 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.



*Pearl Barnes
Head of Education
January 2016*

I began teaching over twenty years ago, initially as a Primary school teacher with a specialism in mathematics. I gained my Masters in Special Educational Needs from Plymouth University whilst working at a school for children with severe, multiple and profound learning needs across all age-ranges. I subsequently went on

to teach in specialist base provision for children with complex needs and as a consultant within the Local Authority for children experiencing mathematical learning difficulties. I have also worked as a SENCO and Head of Learning Support and as an SEN Consultant and writer. I am a Past President of NASEN, where I worked closely with the Department for Education over national policy.

1. What have been the significant changes this year?

Class changes
Whole school timetable
Whole school curriculum
Whole school trip
Families' coffee mornings
Whole School Development Plan
My Goals

1a Class Changes:

In order to develop a curriculum which is personalised and tailored to the individual needs of the children it was decided to create a class which specialised in PMLD and a further class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Class Two and Class Three swapped classes and Class Three became the focused PMLD class, consisting of children from Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. The classes were supported by staff as follows:

Class 1 Teacher - Michelle Tomlinson, 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

1b. Whole School Timetable

The new timetable was embedded which enabled therapists and teaching staff to work side-by-side rather than to take children out of class for their therapy, missing valuable lesson time. Daily sessions consist of five 40 minute sessions. All classes start the day with circle time including registration, a time for sharing their feelings, discussions relating to the weather and an opportunity for sharing news. Each class would then go through the daily timetable by completing the visual timetable for each pupil. Class One and Two provided focused phonics and mathematics groups for children across both classes, combining the children according to their ability.

There is a morning break which consists of a snack time and a valuable time for social interaction. Lunch time is followed by further play opportunities and a whole-school time of Music and Movement through the Active Start session. Whole school assemblies 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. Regular visitors were invited along to assemblies. An afternoon break and snack time was introduced to carry children through to tea time.

1c. Whole school curriculum

As both the educational and health needs of pupils vary greatly, there was a need to develop a curriculum which could be differentiated to meet the individual needs of all learners. The Seven Areas of Learning curriculum was developed to be more accessible and flexible and ensure each child progressed in line with their capabilities. The table below shows the national curriculum objectives which are covered by each of the areas of learning. The curriculum enabled a focus of attention to be drawn upon communication and language development and the physical development of pupils, in addition to core subjects of mathematics, Literacy and Science.

The Topics covered each term were:

Autumn Term: Space

Spring Term: Growing ~ Plants and People

Summer Term ~ Knights, Kings and Castles

Each topic provided the opportunity for an integrated curriculum to be delivered, which provided a more meaningful and personalised approach to teaching and learning.

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 and behaviour	Self-confidence and self-awareness Managing feelings 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>

1d. Whole school trip

As part of the whole-school topic of Kings, Knights and Castles, a visit to Powderham Castle was arranged. This was a hugely successful visit and fun for all involved. Class Three also organised a trip to St Edmunds Church ruins on Exe Bridge. There were short local visits to local shops to develop numerical and social skills in the children in a real and meaningful way.

1e. Families' Coffee Mornings

Families continued to be invited to quarterly Saturday coffee mornings; this provided invaluable opportunity for parents to exchange information and experiences whilst their children took part in art and craft and other game activities which were organised by staff volunteers.

1f. Whole School Development Plan

The Whole School Development Plan focused upon developing writing across the curriculum and across the school, improving the bank of switch operated toys and small equipment, and reinstating the school council, which now meets every term, with representatives from each class and run by Chloe Bond.

1g. My Goals

At the beginning of each term, every class provides parents with a copy of their child's 'My Goals', giving targets for each area of learning which are specific and tailored to the individual child. The targets are reviewed and evaluated at the end of each term, and the evaluations form part of the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress. 'My Goal' evaluations are also provided for parents, to enable them to see the progress made in each area of learning throughout the term.

2. What have been the successes this year?

There were a number of successes across the year, including:

Vranch House continued to welcome a range of students from both Exeter College and Exeter University, studying Health and Social Care and Medicine respectively.

The Space Dome, which was a giant planetarium, proved very popular and successful

The Saturday coffee mornings became increasingly successful

The children participated in a whole-school sports day towards the end of term, which was great fun and enjoyable for all

Children enjoyed growing different fruits and vegetables

The Ofsted inspection in July 2015

3. How much progress do pupils make?

Pupil progress is measured using P Scales and National Curriculum levels, for pupils of school-age, and the EYFS Early Learning Goals for pupils within the Foundation Stage. Pupils 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 a full assessment of each pupil is determined in partnership with other professionals and based upon the evaluation of each target from the pupil's 'My Goals'.

4. How are we making sure that every child receives a teaching approach to meet their individual needs?

The teaching approach is multi-sensory based which includes therapeutic input throughout the day. The planning of teaching activities are based around rigorous assessment which identifies the strengths and needs of pupils and plans to move them on, little by little, towards their targets. This is achieved by:

Setting termly individual 'My Goals' which are linked to Education Health Care plan/Statement of Special Educational Needs and the annual review, with a focus on personalised learning, individual needs and life skills development.

- A range of assessment which builds upon what children know and can do. At the end of each term, a summation of the pupil's attainment is provided, in P Levels of National Curriculum Levels
- Annual monitoring of pupil progress using Durham data analysis.
- Moderation of individual pupil assessment, including links with mainstream schools for pupils who are on a dual placement.
- Regular weekly meetings across therapy and education staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- Input and support from Specialist Advisory Teachers as necessary.

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

Pupils took the opportunity to contribute their ideas through the school council. They told us that they enjoyed growing vegetables and fruit and would like more opportunity to do so. As a result, the greenhouse is frequently used to grow vegetables and fruit outdoors. We are encouraging pupil voice across the whole school community through regular school council meetings.

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

The safety and support of pupils is the highest priority and there are several measures in place to ensure pupils feel safe and cared for at all times. These include:

- The School nurse is on duty at all times.
- There is a high staff to pupil ratio.
- Pupils are actively encouraged to let staff know if they have any worries or concerns.
- There are regular clinics which are held at school, which include: paediatric, orthopaedic, orthoptic, audiology and wheelchair clinics.
- The pupils' diets are closely monitored.
- Healthy snacks are provided at break times.
- There are close links between home, school, through the home-school diary where staff and parents are able to record any information relating to the child.
- There are close links with respite care and transport,

mainstream placements where pupils attending another setting other than Vbranch House are able to discuss the pupil and support their learning and progress.

- As therapy staff are collocated within Vbranch House, sharing of information occurs regularly to ensure the best possible support is provided.
- All staff are trained to a high level of Safeguarding.
- All staff receive a high level of training, including: moving and handling and health and safety.
- All school policies are regularly updated in line with best practice
- Liaison with mainstream settings regarding issues such as attainment, moderation and attendance occurs regularly regarding pupils who access mainstream provision.
- There are regular meetings between teachers, support staff and health professionals to raise concerns or issues at the earliest opportunity.
- The school has an 'Open Door' policy.
- There is a Staff Governor who provides an easily accessible link between staff and management. The Staff Governor represents the views of staff at support and governor's meetings.
- Closed circuit security cameras outside the building.
- Secure boundaries around school.
- All students and volunteers are provided with an induction pack to ensure they are aware of the policies and protocols across the school.
- Regular fire drills.
- High levels of investment in buildings and equipment and regular maintenance.

How do our absence rates compare with other schools?

There were 24 pupils on role with a full-time equivalent of 17. The total authorised absence for the year 17.51 per cent. There were 0.15 per cent unauthorised absence. The level of absence is relatively high due to the nature of the needs of pupils requiring regular respite care and hospital visits.

What activities are available to pupils?

All pupils are given access to a broad and balanced curriculum which is appropriate to their individual needs.

Some children are able to access music therapy through a specialist trained music therapist.

All children have access to the hydrotherapy pool supported through a physiotherapist.

All children have access to the multisensory room and an integrated curriculum which involves a high level of multisensory activity.

Children with a range of communication levels are provided with communication devices according to

their individual levels of capability, including access to:

- Eye gaze
- Signs and symbols
- Objects of reference

There is an outdoor multisensory nature trail for all pupils to access.

There is a high level of ICT equipment which enables pupils to learn ICT proficiency in addition to using ICT as a tool to access learning.

All pupils are able to access the Play room at various opportunities throughout the day.

Pupils receive a holistic education which is appropriate to their needs.

A high level of therapy intervention is provided and support staff have a high level of expertise in therapeutic intervention.

How are the emotional needs of pupils supported?

For some pupils it is entirely appropriate that they are offered the opportunity to share their educational provision with a mainstream setting. This opportunity enables them to booster their self-esteem whilst learning alongside their peers. It enables equality of opportunity as it recognises the individual differences of children.

Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible and independent skills are a part of the daily timetable.

Pupils are given appropriate praise to encourage their esteem and further praise is given through certificates which bolster the pupils learning and engagement.

Pupils are given opportunity to talk with staff and access PSHE as part of the curriculum.

The daily whole-school Active Start provides pupils with fulfilment and enjoyment through singing and movement, bringing the school together and having fun whilst exercising and singing.

Children are regularly encouraged to make choices and take a full part in the learning opportunities.

Collaboration with mainstream partners ensures pupils have a consistency of care and support.

Groupings will vary according to their individual capabilities and ensure pupils are fulfilled and stretched in their learning and achievement, offering a boost to their sense of achievement.

All staff use Makaton to ensure pupils are able to communicate their needs and wants effectively.

10. How would we describe our teaching approach and how the curriculum is adapted for pupils?

The approach to teaching and learning is child-centred based around the needs of the child. Information from rigorous and detailed assessment of the child's strengths and areas to develop provide the baseline

for planning and setting targets.

Each class follows the whole-school planning which is theme-based and covers the seven areas of learning, as described. It is tailored specifically to the individual needs of the pupils through a variety of ways.

Class One provides an early learning curriculum which involves free-play activities in addition to directed tasks, such as focused phonics groups. On occasion, Classes One and Two combine to deliver a differentiated curriculum aimed at building upon what the pupils know and can do, through more structured activities. This is mainly focused phonics and literacy groups.

Class Two and Three offers a range of approaches which are sensory and physically based. Time is given to develop pupils' individual targets within the school day through one-to-one sessions and a range of small group sessions.

All classes provide opportunity for regular outdoor play.

How are we working with parents and the community?

Working with the community is a high priority for the School and this is accomplished in a number of ways. For instance:

There are a high percentage of parent representatives on the Board of Governors.

Therapy sessions are provided during holidays.

Fundraising activities for charities by the children including Children in Need and Young Epilepsy.

There is daily communication with parents through diaries and communication aids.

All parents receive a copy of the 'My Goals' each term and evaluation of My Goals.

Termly parent support leaflets on how families can support their child's learning at home.

End of year Achievement Awards and Special Merit Certificates are provided.

The annual Summer Fayre, Christmas Play, Easter workshop, Harvest supper.

Student placements from universities and colleges.

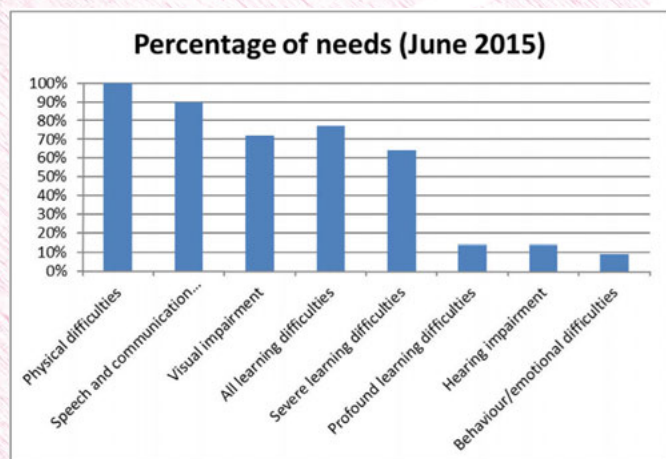
Parents and families are invited to school events e.g. school play and Christmas Carols, Easter Bonnet parade, Achievement Awards assembly, Harvest Festival.

Families' coffee mornings with a specific focus for sharing information.

Parents are encouraged to talk to the Head of Education, the class teachers or therapists should they have any queries. Parents are welcome to join in therapy or school sessions.

What is the range of needs that the School caters for?

The main criteria for admission is a severe physical disability. However, many pupils experience a range of needs, including sensory impairment and severe learning disability. The graph below shows the percentage of need for each category; some pupils may have more than one additional area of need and it is not uncommon for pupils to experience up to four additional needs. The most prevalent combination of need is: physical disability, speech, language and communication needs, visual impairment and severe learning difficulties. A number of pupils are registered severe sight impaired.



13. What do our pupils do after leaving this school?

Vranch House offers specialist provision for children aged 2 to 12 years. Children leave School to attend a variety of settings including:

Mainstream schools

Other specialist providers

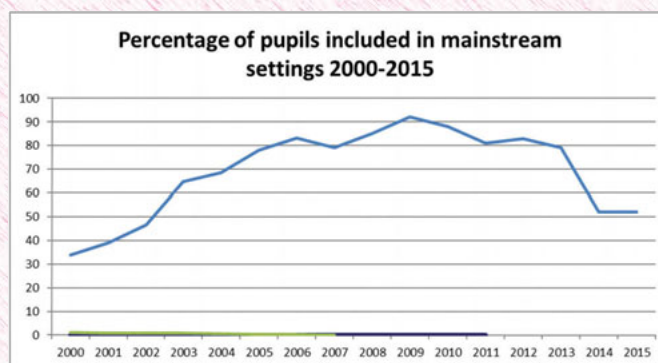
Mainstream schools with specialist base provision for pupils with specific needs, such as physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment (visual or auditory impairment).

Transition to the Secondary school is very carefully organised to enable the pupils to be settled and happy in their new school.

14. How are pupils included into mainstream schools?

When the Education Health Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs is drawn up, a decision is made as to whether there would be an educational or social benefit for pupils to be dual placed; i.e. to spend part of the time at Vranch House and part of the time in a mainstream setting. The placement is dependent upon the needs of the child and is decided on a case-by-case basis.

As the complexity of the needs of pupils has changed in recent years, there has been a decline in the number of pupils who are included within mainstream settings. The graph below shows the changes in inclusion over the last fifteen years.



15. What were the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection in July 2015?

During the beginning of July, the school underwent an Ofsted Inspection. The Inspection found that the School was Good overall. The Behaviour and Safety of the pupils was Outstanding: 'Classrooms and the playground are peaceful and calm places to learn and socialise.'

The Early Years provision was judged as Outstanding: All children are well prepared academically and emotionally for their move to the primary stage.'

The outcome of the Inspection was that the school needed to further develop:

Activities which challenge pupils.

Total communication across the school.

The promotion of pupil's individual goals consistently throughout the day.

16. What can the school do to improve further:

Develop the physical environment to provide an opportunity for a range of approaches:

Children need a variety of opportunities to develop and learn, including outside. It is the goal to develop the outside area for pupils to be able to access play more readily, alongside somewhere safe and calm to learn.

Develop the greater consistency in use of total communication:

The need to develop pupils' communication skills is a pre-requisite imperative to learning and the focus will be upon working in partnership with speech and language therapists to enable staff to be skilled in communication with pupils who have limited communication and who experience sensory impairments.

Develop skills in multisensory curriculum for pupils with a range of multisensory impairment:

87 per cent of pupils at Vranch House experience either a visual or multisensory impairment requiring a different approach to teaching and learning. The aim is to skill all staff to be able to support children with a range of sensory needs effectively.

Ensure that all staff working with the individual children are aware of their individual needs in order to promote and develop their goals throughout the day:

This can be achieved by setting up a Pupil Profile and Pupil Passport for each child, which is readily available for staff to refer to.



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 school side we were sorry to lose Head Teacher, Viktoria Pavlics, at the end of the summer term 2015 when she left to spend more time with her young family and move house. I wish Viktoria and her family every happiness for the future and I am looking forward to getting to know her successor, Pearl Barnes, who has joined V ranch as Head of Education. Some other long standing colleagues left during the year for other avenues and I wish them all well in their new ventures. On a sad note we were all very sorry when one of our esteemed colleagues was taken ill early in 2015 and sadly passed away later in the year. Jackie went about her work in a quiet and efficient manner and was a true friend to staff and children alike - we miss her greatly.

In July 2015 two pupils left the school, one to transfer full-time to secondary education and I wish them both well in their new schools. New younger children have since joined us and I look forward to getting to know them and their families through their time at V ranch House.

Life at V ranch 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.



Children in Need Fancy Dress Day



SUE PHILLIPS
Finance Officer
Joined 1992

I started work at V ranch 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 V ranch 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 V ranch 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 V ranch 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 V ranch, 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 Tomlinson
Teacher ~ Class 1
Joined 2010

TAMMY BROWN
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2008



Working at Vranth House is extremely rewarding. I am currently a Teaching Assistant in Class One and particularly enjoy welcoming new pupils into the School and helping them to settle in.

I also have a keen interest in the children who have complex care needs and enjoy learning new skills to help them within the school environment.

I feel very lucky to work within a multi-disciplinary team and with all the amazing and inspiring children we have.



Misia making biscuits

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 recently qualified as a Higher level teaching assistant.



Chloe Bond
Teacher - Class 2
Joined 2011

I started working at Vranch 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 Vranch House, and the children I teach are amazing making everyday exciting where I learn something new from them.



School Trip to Powderham Castle

SANDRA SELLEY
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2007



I started working at Vranch House as a lunch-time assistant and I am now working full-time as a teaching assistant. It's the children that make my job enjoyable and rewarding.

RONNIE LYE
Teaching Assistant
Joined 1995

Since I joined Vranch 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.



'Princess' Grace



Deborah Down (Dee)
Teacher ~ Class 3
Joined 2002

I have been working at Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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.



MAXEEN HATCH
1:1 Teaching Assistant
Joined 2015

I started at Vranch House in September 2015, working in Class 3. Previously I have worked in day nurseries and with children with special needs in residential and school settings

I am interested in child development and psychology and have been studying these subjects with The Open University.

I look forward to gaining more knowledge and experience during my time at Vranch House.



DEBBIE PROUT
Teaching Assistant
Joined 1991

Although I have worked at Vranch 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.



Melanie Lynch, Dee Down and Bethany Coles on Crazy Hair Day

Clinical Report



Ginny Humphreys
Clinical Director
Joined 1987



Kate Moss
Head of Therapies
Joined 2000

Our ethos is to see children as soon as possible and to provide a fast and efficient service that families' value. We actively seek and respond to feedback from children, carers, schools and others and routinely make changes in practice to take account of their views. Therapists have achieved these aims again this year although it has been hard work to keep up with the number of new referrals into the various services delivered by Vranck House and the team in North Devon.

Overall numbers

There has been a very significant increase in the numbers and complexity of the children being referred. We presume

this is due at least in part to an increase in population and in the numbers of paediatricians employed in the area. In North Devon, for example, over a 10 year period, referrals have increased by a huge 329% from a total number of referrals of 173 in 2004/5 to 312 in 2006/7 to 569 in 2014/5. In Exeter, over a 3 month period in 2014 compared with the same period in 2015, referrals increased from 191 to 268, a rise of 40% in just a year. Likewise the numbers in the county's special schools have increased. For example, Ellen Tinkham School had 67 pupils in 2000 and now has 141, an increase of 209%. A similar increase has occurred at Pathfield School.

As public funding from our partner organisations, NHS Devon and Devon County Council, has remained static there has been little opportunity to increase the number of therapy hours available. Instead therapists have been working even 'smarter' by:

- Focusing on patient –reported difficulties and targeting function.
- Training others e.g. TAs to carry out day to day therapy input with regular supervision and updating from therapists.
- Running groups for fine motor skills.
- Introducing Fun Fit into mainstream schools to reduce referrals for difficulties that can be dealt with better in school.
- Encouraging the use of adapted Fun Fit in special schools.
- A wider, but entirely appropriate, use of advice leaflets e.g. to reassure parents of infants with normal variants of gait rather than offering appointments in the first instance.
- Working with the wider multi-disciplinary team to share responsibility for the most complex children.

High quality of service

Flexibility of service is our mantra so that children and families are provided with what they individually need, when they need it. We keep waiting times low by focusing on the challenge of high referral numbers, changing the way we work and adapting to the demand appropriately. This brings great benefits for children and families by avoiding the distress of having to wait for services they have been told they need. However, we are never complacent and have to keep our eye on the ball!

We aim to keep research at the heart of our practice and ethos. New research is incorporated into practice e.g. Constraint Induced Therapy introduced to parents in a group for very young children with hemiplegia in Barnstaple. Ginny has been working with the Peninsula Cerebra Research Unit (PenCRU) on a Cochrane review (P00100 'Sleep Positioning for Children with cerebral Palsy.') We are amongst national leaders in 24 hour postural management, writing a care pathway in 2004 which has been shared with other therapy services nationally and internationally and by currently leading the writing of a guide for night time supported lying for children and adults. This will consist of a systematic review followed by a Delphi Survey of the key issues by international experts in the field.

Leadership

Over the last two years the day-to-day leadership of the therapy services has moved firmly into the adroit hands of Kate Moss who is an integral member of the Senior Management Team, advising the Chair of Trustees, the Chief Executive and the Head of Education on all manner of therapy issues.

The Clinical Director's role is largely strategic. Ginny Humphreys informs Commissioners of the activity levels achieved, raises key issues for debate and leads on certain clinical areas and in the field of research.

We are fortunate in having Sally Bunney, a very experienced and skilled clinician leading the team in North Devon. We thank and applaud the whole therapy team for their immensely valuable work in the special schools, the outpatient clinics, in their support for mainstream schools, for the many domiciliary visits into often isolated parts of Devon all throughout the year and for the excellent admin support behind it all.

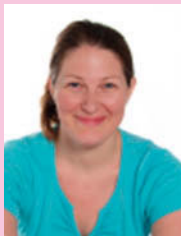
Physiotherapy



KATHRYN ESAU - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 1990

I work 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 V ranch 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 WILLIS - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined November 2009

After qualifying in 1999, I gained experience working as a physiotherapist in a variety of specialist areas and settings in Ipswich and Middlesex. In 2002, I started my paediatric career in West Hertfordshire, working with children and young people aged 0-19 years in the community, in schools, on the children's ward and in the neonatal unit. In 2007 I returned to Devon with my family, where I grew up. I worked for several months at Honeylands Children's Centre in Exeter in 2008, before joining the team at V ranch House in 2009. I am currently working with children aged

0-19 years, splitting my time between the outpatients department and the community, where I visit children with physical difficulties in their mainstream schools to support school staff and children in their physical management. 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

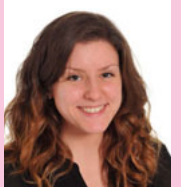
I qualified as Physiotherapist in 2009 and after completing core rotations specialised in Paediatrics. I have now been part of the V ranch House Therapy Team for just over three years and it continues to be a very rewarding job and environment. At present I work two days a week at Honeyland's Children's assessment centre for children aged 0-5 years. I manage an outpatient caseload in addition to working closely with the nursery nurses and wider multi-disciplinary

team with children who attend specialist nursery groups. The rest of my week is three days based at V ranch House working in outpatients which involves seeing children in clinics and in mainstream school settings all with a variety of physical impairments. I enjoy how diverse and different my role is; seeing children aged 0-18 years is a great experience and seeing such a wide age range brings a variety of assessment and treatment techniques which challenge me on a day to day basis.



LOUISA HETHERINGTON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2004

I have been working with the V ranch 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!



ALLIE ALTON-VANDERSTAY - Therapies Administration Assistant - Joined 2014

I started working at V ranch House in November 2014 as the Therapy Administration Assistant. I also do the clerical side of the Fun Fit training here and assist Sarah Stone, Physiotherapist, in the training sessions. I love administrative work and to have the opportunity to be doing this as part of the V ranch team is wonderful. I am looking forward to many years here at V ranch House.



HANNA McFADDEN - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2012

I joined V ranch House in 2013 and am based at the Honeylands Child Assessment Centre where I work with 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 2013 I completed my Bobath Neurodevelopmental training and have really enjoyed putting this into practise. This year I was given an exciting opportunity to be part of an innovative project designing a new type of dynamic seating for children with dystonic

Cerebral Palsy. For this I travel to Bath two days a week to work with a specialist team of engineers, medics and therapists studying child development and within this client group. It's great that V ranch House is so dedicated to pushing the boundaries of science and therapy and so keen to be at the forefront of evidence based change.



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.



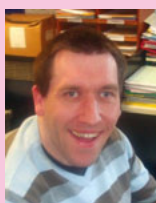
LIZ HUTCHERSON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2014

I have been a member of the Vranth House therapy team since June 2014. Since January 2016 my caseload has changed from split working between school and outpatients to now being based in school where I am able to spend more time working with the children to develop their physical abilities. I also work closely with families, mainstream schools and other professionals such as paediatricians.



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 Vranth 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!



VICKI BEATTIE - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2015

I joined Vranth House at the end of September 2015. I have been working within the Educational sector since 2005 gaining various qualifications. Being at Vranth House is a new and exciting challenge and I am very proud to be part of such a supportive and dynamic team.

HELEN HICKS - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2006

I joined Vranth 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 vranth therapy team, now with extra responsibilities in hydrotherapy with school children and outpatients.



THE ELLEN TINKHAM TEAM

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



We work as part of the wider team of Vranth 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 multiply learning difficult (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 special equipment needed and review this on a regular basis. We liaise closely with educational staff and speech therapy colleagues based at Ellen Tinkham and other professionals.

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

North Devon Community Children's Physiotherapy Service 2016

2015 brought many changes to Vbranch's North Devon Team, based at Barnstaple Health Centre.

The team in North Devon comprises 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 in March 2015 we 'lost' a valuable colleague and friend, Physiotherapist Ellie Waugh-Baker, as she moved away due to her husband's work. Fortunately, however we recruited a new Physiotherapist, Rhiannon Bennett to the team in April 2015.

Rhiannon settled in quickly. Apart from being a strong team member, she brought valuable and new musculo-skeletal experience to the team.

Four months later we had another experienced Physiotherapist leave as Rob Shaw moved to take up a new community post in Taunton, Somerset. After working in the team for ten years, his departure was a great loss. Rob was highly experienced and valued by the children, parents and his colleagues. We will miss him greatly.

This vacancy led us to fortunately gain another experienced Physiotherapist. Gemma Rous joined our team in September 2015. Graduating from Brunel University in 2007 Gemma has worked in a wide range of settings both overseas and in the UK. Specialising in Paediatrics since 2008, her clinical interest in Cerebral Palsy led her to complete the highly regarded Bobath foundation course.

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; Rhiannon Bennett, Sarah Stone, Gemma Rous
Front l-r; Michelle Yandell, Charlotte Thomas, Sally Bunney*

Sally Bunney Lead Physiotherapist

Started working in North Devon for Vbranch 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.

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.

Gemma Rous

Gemma covers the Physiotherapy needs of children in the Specialist Child Assessment Centre at Highfield House. In 2016 she plans to develop a 'Baby Gym' available for babies under the age of one year, who were born prematurely in North Devon. This will be a valuable follow up support for parents whose babies have been discharged from the Special Care Baby Unit at North Devon District Hospital. In addition Gemma will be the Therapeutic Taping advisor for the team, and monitors and develops our parent carer information leaflets.

Rhiannon Bennett

Rhiannon screens referrals for the team on a weekly basis so that we are able to quickly identify urgent cases and determine individual needs. She has been very supportive in organising the In Service Training programme, Journal Clubs and being the Student Educator and Coordinator for the team.

Clinically, combined with a mixed caseload of conditions and ages, Rhiannon supports the younger children in Pathfield School, and covers the Developmental Coordination Clinic.

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 1:1 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.

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
- 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

Michelle 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.

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 (i.e. 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.



*Nina Darke
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.

The Nurses

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 and Community Children's Nurses. The Dieticians 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, other specialist teams and the community or school nurses.
- Seizure management - Each child has an emergency protocol and is reviewed by a Paediatrician and also has advice from the hospital Epilepsy Nurse.
- Catheterisation.
- Emergency tracheostomy care including ventilation as a support role.
- Oxygen therapy.
- Monitoring general health and wellbeing.

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
 - Dieticians
 - TAs from Mainstream Schools
 - Orthoptist and Optician
 - Audiology Team
 - Bladder and Bowel Specialist Nurse
 - Dentist - examination only and treatment discussed
- Year 4 Medical Students come into school on a Tuesday morning to observe and interact with the children. This is such a good experience for them to really get to know the children and to discover how unique each child is - after all they will soon become our future Hospital Doctors and the Vranth House team have a wealth of skill and knowledge to share with them.



Ruth Whitthorn
Nurse
Joined 1983



Marie Brown
Nurse
Joined 2014

Occupational Therapy



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

Over the last few months there have been even more changes within the occupational therapy team. Following the departure of Clare Webber, occupational therapist, who had worked at Vranth House for many years, two new OTs have joined our team.

Helen North joined the team in June 2015 to take on the role of OT for school as well as the therapist for the specialist wheelchair service. Helen is already a fantastic asset to the team and very popular with the children in school.

In October 2015 we were very lucky to welcome Laura Kaikoura, she has joined Lisa Stoner and myself to provide the OT Service for Outpatients. Laura has settled quickly into the team and her enthusiasm has been infectious.

Working at Vranth 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 Vranth House and I feel privileged to be able to work with such a friendly and supportive team. My role at Vranth house involves working with outpatients which I thoroughly enjoy.

Specialist Wheelchair Service



LAURA KAIKOURA

Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist - Joined 2015

I studied my first degree at the University of Exeter gaining a sociology degree, more recently I have completed my Post Graduate Diploma in Occupational Therapy at Cardiff University. I achieved a distinction and was awarded the Clair Dalling Sunflower Award nominated by staff for the student making the most significant contribution to the learning of others.

My first Occupational Therapy role was within an acute hospital setting giving me a good foundation of fast paced practice in a challenging environment.

I have previously worked in schools in Swaziland, Africa and with homeless children in the UK and am always inspired by the resilience, enthusiasm and the 'can do' attitude of young people.

My passion however has always been working with children and young people, so my role here at Vranth House is a dream come true. I have enjoyed the friendly warm atmosphere of Vranth House and have been graciously welcomed by all the staff and students.

Despite the small size of the occupational therapy team, they provide a forward thinking, innovative practice that always has children and their families at the core of service delivery and development. I have enjoyed getting to know the team and the families on my case load, I am looking forward to increasing my knowledge and expertise and learning from the fantastic team here at Vranth House.



HELEN NORTH

Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined 2015

As a new employee, my initial role was to work with outpatients and see children from mainstream schools. However, with a change in the team I was lucky enough to be offered the opportunity to change my role and work within the school. It is a joy to work with such happy children and implement interventions to help them be as independent as possible. The main areas I look at are toileting, seating and fine motor activities. As part of this role I will be helping to deliver postural management training to parents and carers.

Alongside this I am the therapist for the Specialist Wheelchair Service run by Vranth 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.

Speech and Language Therapy Report

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 thanks	why	Mum	she, her	am	wash	write
I'm telling the truth	Hello Goodbye	what	Dad	it	are	play	sit walk
It's not on my board	next	who	Laura	you	was	help	ride
I'm lying.	first last	when	man lady	we, us	were	work	drive
I don't understand	before after	how	boy girl	they, them	have	music sing	read
I want to talk about something else now	morning a.m. afternoon p.m.	yesterday	baby	Speech and Language	had	do	hug
talking book please	day night	today	teacher	Physio	has	want	like love
may I go to the toilet	now about	tomorrow	helper	friend	maybe	draw paint	sleep



Speech and Language Therapy Report

There have been lots of changes within the Speech and Language Therapy Team over the past year. The team now has 3 staff, Katie and Cara, speech and language therapists and Denise our speech and language therapy assistant.

The team are now responsible for both the service at Vranth House School alongside the AAC Service which supports children across Devon who attend mainstream schools.

Communication

We continue to focus on creating a total communication approach and environment at Vranth House School to make sure we use all methods of communication to support our children. This includes the use of both low and high tech systems such as objects of reference and picture symbols through to sophisticated augmentative communication devices including eye gaze systems.

We are now working very closely with the children within their class based sessions which has been a great way of getting to spend time seeing what they are doing throughout the day and ensuring they have all the communication resources they need throughout the school day.

We are now exploring the use of more auditory and tactile means of communication and working closely with other specialists to support our children who have multi-sensory disabilities so we are all learning lots!

Dysphagia

Katie and Cara, alongside the school nurses and occupational therapist are also responsible for managing any eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties that pupils at VHS may have. This means spending lots of time alongside children and staff in the dining room to carry out assessments and to help everyone develop their skills at mealtimes.



KATIE GARLAND
Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist AAC Service - Joined 2012



CARA PORTER
Specialist Speech & Language Therapist AAC Service - Joined 2015

Lunchtime Assistants



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 lunch-time assistant in November 2013. The staff have made me feel very welcomed and it is a pleasure being around the children.



LORRAINE CHAPMAN - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 1993

I enjoy coming in each day and helping the children over the lunch time period. As well as having the chance to play with the children I enjoy watching them progress in their learning. The children's personalities make each day different and interesting making my job rewarding.



CATHERINE BAYFIELD - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2014

I started work at Vranth House in November 2014 as a lunch-time assistant. The work is rewarding and each day is very different. I am now reducing my time at Vranth and becoming a relief assistant. However, I look forward to coming in and seeing the children again.



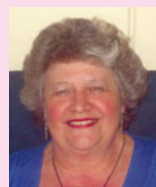
ADRIAN JACKSON - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2015

I joined the Vranth House team in September 2015 and am a lunchtime support assistant. It's great to spend time with the children as we support them at lunchtime.



KERSTIE DAVIES - Relief Lunchtime / Support Assistant - Joined 2015

I recently joined Vranth House as a lunchtime assistant and also help in the classes and in the hydrotherapy pool. The staff have been very welcoming and I have enjoyed getting to know the children and all of the team.



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.



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 or hydrotherapy assistant.



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.



TERESA SPRAGUE - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2015

I joined Vranth House as a lunchtime assistant in September 2015. Working with the children at Vranth is very rewarding, I enjoy learning something new every day.

Kitchen Staff

2015 saw the installation of a new kitchen at Vranth. The equipment we had was installed when the school was built, although the cupboards were updated in the 90's. The 2015-16 academic year started with a new kitchen which is bright and much easier to keep clean. We are getting to grips with the new technology (a dish washer!). Our lunches are delivered from the hospital. We sort the meals out i.e. mash/cut them up as required or sort special diets in time for when the children come into the hall.

We really love our work.



Various Roles



Simon Batstone - Groundsman/Technician - Joined 2011

Having spent 28 years at Vranth House as a sub-contractor groundsman, I had the pleasure of being offered a full time job as Groundsman Technician at the School. Having been here for five years now as part of the maintenance team we have accomplished many projects and refurbishments inside and out and it remains a pleasure to work in such a caring environment with dedicated staff 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

Andrew Barge Marketing Manager



This year has been another fantastic year for Vranch 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 2014-15.

- 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
- The companies and trusts who respond so generously to our appeals.
- 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.
- Miss Ellie Giles for raising £104 with a sponsored silence
- J Wippell and Co for their continued support
- Devon Freemasons for their donation of £1,000
- The Stowey Arms, Exminster and Mr Grahame Symonds for their donation of £1,000
- The CostCutter Group for their donation of £2,234
- Moto in the Community Trust for their continued support.
- Exeter Family Welfare Association
- Darren Roberts for running the Exeter Half Marathon and raising £345.
- Tower Street Methodist church in Exmouth
- The Passage Inn for their continued support
- Mr Clarke and C Jones of Bristol for their continued support and fundraising
- Stewart Brooking for raising £1,178.
- Mark Westaway for his fundraising by swimming the length of Lake Windermere.

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



The staff of Whoops-a-Daisy in Sidmouth take delivery of the collecting doll after she'd had a makeover



Maggie, from Peak Hill Llamas near Sidmouth with Ollie and Golly meet the children at Vranch House



Collectors at an Exeter Chiefs match collecting valuable funds for the Exeter Foundation who in turn donate to Vranch House.

Redevelopment of our Hydrotherapy Pool

We are always looking to extend, enhance and share the experiences and equipment we have and the things we have come to know. We always seek to improve the environment for our children and staff as can be seen in the constant development of the buildings and facilities at Vranth House and now, in our planned redevelopment of the hydrotherapy pool.

What is Hydrotherapy?

Hydro therapy is an essential tool for our therapists in the treatment of children with physical disabilities or painful medical conditions. The buoyancy provided by the water enables exercises which would be impossible for children who have compromised movement and balance. These exercises thus improve movement and balance when out of the water.

Hydrotherapy uses a higher temperature than a public swimming pool to provide an optimal, and highly motivational, environment which the therapists can use to decrease pain, increase ranges of movement and improve fitness after illness and surgery.

For many of the pupils and patients of Vranth House the benefits of hydrotherapy are more than those just gained in the water. After the children's muscles have relaxed and having been strengthened in the warm water we then go on to work on life skills such as dressing, mobility, communication and further educational targets back in the classroom.

The benefits of hydrotherapy are multifaceted, and it has a significant long term impact on the health and wellbeing of the children who access Vranth House school and therapy department.

The existing covered and heated hydrotherapy pool is used by Honeylands Children's Specialist Assessment Centre, by the Community physiotherapy service for adults with learning disabilities and by adults recovering from strokes. Children from Vranth House and from mainstream schools attend hydrotherapy sessions at the pool every day.

Why Do We need to Improve the Hydrotherapy Pool?

The old building is little more than a plastic tent and it is virtually impossible to produce a stable and comfortable environment inside it. The changing facilities are very limited and out of date and we rely on a single pool-side hoist to lift disabled children and adults into and out of the water. The new building and plant offers substantial improvements to the environment and to the ways in which the pool can be used. The significant costs of operating a pool when heat and water is lost to an uncontrolled environment will be greatly reduced and the opportunity will be taken to cover one complete elevation of the roof with photovoltaic panels. These should generate enough power to cover the energy costs offering a saving which can be paid into our funds for providing enhanced services to children with physical difficulties.



The New Building

We have embarked on a "pound for pound" fund raising campaign with a target of raising £235,000 to accompany the £235,000 we have earmarked from investment capital to pay for a new hydrotherapy pool building. The old building served the community well for over forty years. Replacing it will make sustainable the operation of a facility which is unique in Exeter and valued by the surrounding community. Please contact Andrew Barge on 01392 463819 if you would like to donate to this demonstrably worthwhile project. Thank you.

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

Pinhoe Road, Exeter, EX4 8AD

Telephone: 01392 468333

www.vranchhouse.org