



# Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2015 - 2016



# 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 2015 - 2016

## Board of the Society

**Chairman:** Julia Tolman-May  
**Vice Chairman:** Mr A Griffin  
Mrs M Williams  
Miss P Hale  
Mrs S Mathieson (to 25/11/15)  
Mr W Richards (to 25/11/15)  
Mrs C Tailford (to 25/11/15)  
Mrs R Pavitt  
Mr C Rendle  
Dr R Tomlinson (from 25/11/15)  
Miss S Williams (from 25/11/15)  
Mrs M Wood (from 25/11/15)  
Col. G Wheeler<sup>++</sup>  
Dr G Humphreys<sup>+</sup>  
Ms K Moss<sup>+</sup>  
Miss V Pavlics (to 01/09/15)<sup>+</sup>  
Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16)<sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>Ex Officio Members  
<sup>++</sup>Secretary

The persons listed above, less the ex-officio members, were the appointed Trustees and Directors of the Society for the 2015 - 2016 Financial Year

## Board of Governors

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

Miss V Pavlics (to 01/09/15)<sup>+</sup>  
Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16)<sup>+</sup>  
Ms K Moss<sup>++</sup>  
Mrs V Lye..  
Mrs M Wood...  
Mr S Algarny (to 31/12/15)...  
Miss S Williams...  
Miss S Tutinas...

..Staff Representative  
...Parent Governors  
<sup>+</sup>Head of Education  
<sup>++</sup>Head of Therapies

## Management Committee

**Chairman:** Mrs J Tolman-May  
Miss V Pavlics (to 01/09/15)  
Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16)  
Col G Wheeler  
Ms K Moss

## Principal Staff

**Chief Executive**  
Colonel G F Wheeler MPhil., CGIA

**Head of Education**  
Miss V Pavlics M.Ed(SEN) (to 01/09/15)  
Mrs P Barnes BSc(Hons), MA(SEN) (to 23/05/16)  
Mr I Norton BEng(Hons), BPhil, QTVI (from 05/09/16)

**Head of Therapies**  
Ms K MOSS BSc (Hons), MCSP

## Consulting Physicians

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

**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*  
Grace - Class 2  
Harvey - Class 2  
Reuben - Class 1

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2016 AGM

I will make this report, my fourth as your Chairman, as brief as I can!

During my time as a Trustee and as Chairman I have learned that Vranth House never stands still. It is always innovating and improving and must always keep ahead of developments in education and health. A perfect example of this is how all schools must now define their own "Core Offer" or range of services which they will make available to all the pupils in their care. As Vranth House School provides education and healthcare for children with profound and multiple difficulties it must have the capabilities to meet their needs. I will not list all of these here but those of you with access to the internet can read the Core Offer in full under "What We Do" and then "Education at Vranth House".

This Core Offer was accepted by the Authority and is now part of our joint contract with Devon County Council and the NHS. In order to fully staff all the services we have employed extra personnel with the result that the charity now employs more people than it ever has in the past (currently seventy-two). We now have a new Head of Education, Ian Norton, who amongst many other talents is a fully qualified Teacher for the Visually Impaired. He has recruited a Visual Impairment Specialist Support Assistant, Jackie Beckford, who is also a graduate and a Nursery Nurse. Our new Senior Specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Tracey Jones, joined us in October and has brought an impressive range of experience and qualification to our school speech therapy and community Augmentative Communication services. Ian will be telling us more about his plans for the school but as a trailer for his report I can say that the Governors and the Trustees, like Dickens, have "Great Expectations"!

We have had a fair measure of change in the management of the school over the past two years. It is more than appropriate that we recognise our debt to Kate Moss, our Head of Therapies, who twice took over the running of the school and somehow achieved a successful transition to two new Heads of Education with no loss of effectiveness to either the clinical department or the school. This was an outstanding achievement and we are all most grateful to her.

Graeme Wheeler will tell us more about the financial performance of the charity over the last year but the headline news has to be the new Hydrotherapy pool. No expense was spared in the design and this is visible in the end result which is quite literally breath-taking. It is not simply a heated pool but a theatre for water-based learning activities which are further enhanced by state of the art air-conditioning, water treatment, hoists and changing facilities. If any of you would like to see the new facility, Graeme will take any interested parties up to the pool after this meeting.

All our other services have performed as you would hope. We see over 2,000 children every year in our clinics and there are twenty-four children in the school. We have still not received a single complaint and our Friends & Family review places satisfaction of 96% of referrals in the highest of five categories with just 4% in the next category down and none in the lower three. This is another significant achievement and is only possible because of the dedication and professionalism of all our staff. I am sure that you would want to join me in thanking all our employees but I would also like to include the work done by our Governors and Trustees – all of whom are voluntary – in advising and assisting in the management of this charity of ours. We have had another successful year and look forward with confidence to the next twelve months.

Julia Tolman-May  
Chairman





## General Report of the Board of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2016

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016.

### Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity Name	The Devon & Exeter Spastics Society
(Working Title):	Vranch House
Charity Registration Number:	1002700
Company Registration Number:	02599511
Registered Office and Operational Address:	Vranch House School & Centre, Pinhoe Road EXETER, DEVON EX4 8AD
Auditors:	Kirk Hills, 5 Barnfield Crescent, Exeter, Devon, EX1 1RF
Bankers:	NatWest, St Thomas Branch, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1DB
Solicitors:	Foot Anstey, Senate Court, Exeter, EX1 1NT

### Board of the Society

Mrs J Tolman-May	Chairman
Mr A J Griffin	Vice Chairman
Mrs M Williams	
Miss P Hale	
Mrs S Mathieson	to 25 November 2015
Mr W Richards	to 25 November 2015
Mrs C Tailford	to 25 November 2015
Mrs R Pavitt	
Mr C Rendle	
Dr R Tomlinson	from 25 November 2015
Miss S Williams	from 25 November 2015
Mrs M Wood	from 25 November 2015

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 to 1 September 2015 & Mrs P Barnes to  
 23 May 2016 (*ex officio as Heads of Education*)

### 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 of Education to 1 September 2015
Mrs P Barnes	Head of Education to 23 May 2016
Mrs K Moss	Head of Therapies
Mrs V Lye	Staff member

Mrs M Wood	Parent Governor
Mr S Algarny	Parent Governor to 31 December 2015
Miss S Williams	Parent Governor
Miss S Tutinas	Parent Governor

### Management Committee

Mrs J Tolman-May	Chairman
Col G Wheeler	
Mrs K Moss	
Miss V Pavlics	to 1 September 2015
Mrs P Barnes	to 23 May 2016

## 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 seventy-three members each of whom are liable to the extent of their membership fee in the event of the company being wound up. All members have the right to vote at General Meetings.

### Appointment of Trustees

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

### Trustee Induction & Training

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



skills but the charity will meet any identified need for specialist training.

### **Organisation**

The Board of the Society has strategic oversight of the charity and meets three times a year. The Board establishes all policy for the general direction and operation of the charity and meets to review those policies and to hear a record of operations. The Board employs a Chief Executive to work with a Head of Therapies and a Head of Education to oversee, direct and drive forward the Board's policies for the Clinic and the School (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 of Education and meet statutory obligations for maintained schools, the Board has established a Board of Governors for the school. The Board of Governors has direct control of those matters bearing on the delivery of educational services; matters relating to finance, employment and resources, if not within the competence of the Governors, are referred to the Board of Trustees. The Head of Therapy is responsible to the Trustees for the full delivery of the clinical contract which includes professional and service delivery standards. In this she is assisted by the Chief Executive who retains direct control of all matters relating to the contract.

### **Related Parties**

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

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

School raise money each year for other charities which have included Comic Relief and the Royal British Legion.

### **Risk Management**

As a normal part of the annual business cycle the Society reviews its Risk Assessments. These include financial management, accounting, security of cash and removable assets, insurances, fire and Health & Safety. The outcome of these assessments is reported to the Trustees by the Chief Executive. The Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Cash Handling, Legionella and Fire Risk Assessments are translated into operating policies which are available to all employees, together with all the other policy documents, on the Charity's website. Employees at every level are encouraged to contribute to the continuous business of risk assessment through the Staff Meetings held every month.

### **Objectives and Activities**

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

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

The core activities arising from these aims are the education of children with physical difficulties from the age of two to twelve at Vranth House School and the provision of paediatric 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.

## STRATEGIC REPORT

### 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 significant increases in the number of out patient referrals and in the number of school pupils placed in the school with complex needs. There was an average of twenty-four 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, teachers and support staff are engaged in or have access to programmes of learning some of which will lead to first or second degrees. 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 Mobility Project Manager has taken on the technical development and subsequent management and operation of the new hydrotherapy pool.

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 9.5 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.

The charity embarked in January 2016 on the demolition and rebuild of the hydrotherapy pool. The new structure is designed to be a theatre for aquatic therapy. It will have a fully integrated multi-sensory suite, a complete capability for hoisting users from every part of the two large changing rooms into and out of the water, and a heat and water recovery air-conditioning system. The pool will be levelled so that it is useable throughout its length and photo-voltaic cells on the roof will more than provide for the electrical power requirements in



daylight.

### Plans for Future Periods

The new Service Led Agreement with Devon County Council and NEW CCG has operated since the 1<sup>st</sup> 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%. We have defined a new Core Offer for the school which has been agreed by Devon County Council. It offers significant value for money for the authority and yet will make the future of the school sustainable at the increased level of service provision required by the cohort of children educated in the school.

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 programmes of research led by our Clinical Director will inform 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.

### Income & Service Risks

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

**1. Income Growth** The next five years are likely to include a period of between two and three years in which national fiscal disciplines and retrenchment in public service investment continues. 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 eight years. We have defined 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 has facilitated an adjustment of the education component of the Agreement to meet the needs of the children in the school. 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.

**2. Income Security** The combined contract is non-competitive because of the high amount of public benefit developed by it (now around 42% of the true costs of the statutory services provided by the charity is funded by the charity). The contract has a twenty-five year life (until 2036) and the only threat to it is a sustained or existential failure to meet the service quality standards. The charity contribution is largely met from the revenue charges and revenue it waives, principally for the use of capital facilities which the charity owns and the running costs of these facilities; thus there is a very low risk of this not continuing.

**3. Quality Standards** The Chief Executive is tasked with maintaining a continuous cycle of Risk Assessment reviews assisted and advised by the Heads of Department in the Senior Management Team (the Head of Therapies and the Head of Education). 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 2016 of £1,743,047 (£1,630,594 in 2015), an increase of £112,453. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,245,166 (£1,311,460 in 2015). This decrease of £66,294 is the product of creditors and cash balances largely caused by investment in the new pool building. The Society has Net Assets amounting to £6,056,466 (£5,998,880 in 2015) the increase of £57,586 being the net movement in funds between the year under audit and the last. Adding back depreciation of £139,305 (a non monetary expense), the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £196,891 (£55,488 last year).

Important transactions in the year include the contract income of £1,449,236 (£1,431,790 in 2015) from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from charitable and all other sources was £290,305. The capital costs not charged to our contract partners is in excess of £600,000 which 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 & Going Concern

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 fiscal retrenchment and unprecedented low interest rates have proved the wisdom of establishing and maintaining this policy. The Trustees are unanimous in the opinion that the Charity remains a going concern.

### **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.

### **Pay and Emolument Policy for All Staff**

The Trustees serve as volunteers and eschew reward and expenses.

The policy established by the Trustees for setting and reviewing the pay for all employed staff is;

1. As the charity exists to provide services and these services are delivered by trained personnel, expenditure on pay is the largest part of all revenue spending. The rates and costs of staff expenditure are thus reviewed and approved by the Trustees at all their meetings.
2. Pay rates for all staff are set on the principal that the rates must be competitive within the local charitable sector so that the charity can continue to recruit high quality staff.
3. As the charity employs and relies on the services provided by a number of personnel without professional qualifications, pay at the lower level must exceed national benchmarks. The charity was thus one of the first to meet the national living wage rather than the national minimum wage.
4. The multiple between the lowest and the highest paid should not exceed a factor of five.
5. All staff must have access to appropriate pension schemes and these, again, must be competitive within the local charitable sector.
6. The Chief Executive is responsible for providing the Management Committee and the Board of Trustees with information on the annual pay and emoluments budget.

## **ASSEVERATIONS**

### **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.

### **Auditors**

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

### **Approval of the Directors' and Strategic Reports**

The Directors' and Strategic Reports were approved by the Board of the Society (the Board of Directors and Trustees) on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 and signed on its behalf.

J Tolman-May

Chairman

November 2016



## 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 2016

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2015 – 2016 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 increased by £112,453 from £1,630,594 to £1,743,047 but Debtors and Pre-Payments increased by £42,712 from £31,651 to £74,363 simply because of the capital project pre-payments for the new Hydrotherapy Pool. These trends are not significant.
- Net Current Assets fell by £66,294 from £1,311,460 to £1,245,166 largely as a result of capital investment in the new pool building but Total Net Funds increased from £5,998,880 to £6,056,466.
- Fixed Assets increased despite depreciation by £123,880 from £4,687,420 to £4,811,300. Depreciation remains a 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 of £139,305 carried as a non-monetary expense the charity made an operating surplus of £57,586 but with Depreciation discounted a net cash surplus of £196,891 was generated (£55,488 last year).
- It is a commendable reflection of internal fiscal controls that total expended resources decreased in the year under audit by £14,099.
- 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 services hosted by it.

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

### Future Plans

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

continue the investment programme by further developing charitable income and work with its partners to respond to financial retrenchment by adaptive working practises. Our long established financial policy of holding reserves amounting to no less than a year's operating costs has proved its worth on many occasions. Given the uncertainty and instability of the financial markets and the continued imperative of national fiscal discipline we intend to maintain and further develop this reserve. The policy of not charging capital costs in any of our contracts forms the basis of our charitable benefit by contributing significantly to the 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 2017 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, having authorised a £0.5m investment to replace the hydrotherapy pool building and plant between 2015 and 2016, will look to continue the programme of buildings and equipment development and maintenance in 2017.

Colonel Graeme Wheeler, Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account	2016	2015	2014
Gross Income	£1,743,047	£1,630,594	£1,631,559
Gross Expenditure	£1,685,461	£1,699,560	£1,739,780
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	£57,586	−£68,966	−£108,221
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£196,891	£55,488	£119,784

### Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2016	2015	2014	2013
Total Funds	1.22%	0.53%	0.43%	0.70%
Creditors as a Percentage of:				
Current Assets	10.45%	5.00%	11.80%	7.60%
As a Percentage of Total Funds				
Profit/Loss for the Year <sup>1</sup>	3.25%	0.90%	1.98%	2.00%
Revenue Costs	28%	28.33	28.7%	26.3%

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 2015/16 is available on request at a cost of £2.00 per copy but may be viewed at no cost but by prior arrangement at Vranth House or on the Charity Commission website at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).





*Ian Norton  
Head of Education  
Joined 2016*

### 1. What have been the significant changes this year?

- School Management
- Class changes
- Timetable changes
- A Vbranch House VIEW Curriculum
- Extension to the Core Offer

#### 1a. School Management

My sincere thanks go to Kate Moss, Head of Therapies, for doing such an excellent job as acting Head of Education in-between the departure of Pearl Barnes and my joining Vbranch House. Her knowledge, experience and support have been invaluable to me in getting to know all the pupils, parents and staff of Vbranch House.

For those of you I have yet to meet, I thought it would be appropriate to give you a synopsis of my experience in education to date. I started my teaching career as a Year 1 teacher at St Michael's Primary School in Reading, before moving onto Brookfields Special School (also in Reading), where I trained to become a Qualified Teacher of the Impaired (QTVI). Since then

I have worked for Plymouth City Council as an Advisory Teacher for the Visually Impaired and have spent the last five years at the WESC Foundation in Exeter. During this time, I held various management roles including most recently that of Deputy Director of Education.

Since joining the management team at Vbranch House I have been working hard to maintain all the excellent practice I have observed so far and in the rest of this report I will give details of just some of the areas of work I have embarked upon with my new colleagues since September 2016.

#### 1b. Class Changes

As is periodically required, there have been changes to teachers and support staff in each of our three classes. As of Jan 2017, we have also opened a bespoke Nursery class here at Vbranch House. Each class team is led by designated teacher (or Nursery Nurse in the case of our Nursery) and comprises a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), a Therapy & Learning Assistant (TLA) and a Teaching Assistant (TA), as well as part-time support from our Meal Time Assistants (MTA). Where a pupil has particularly acute medical needs, these teams may also have a Health Care Assistant (HCA). HLTAs are able to deputise for the class teacher and will hold at least a Level 3 qualifications. The TLAs work closely with the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy staff allocated to Vbranch House to ensure delivery of best practice in classes regarding postural management, positioning, exercise programs and use of specialist equipment to promote physical development.

The current staff allocation for each class is as follows:

Nursery	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
<b>Nursery Nurse:</b> Jackie Beckford (Plus two x Multi-Sensory Impairment Workers (Virgin Care) as 1:1 support with two pupils in this class)	<b>Teacher:</b> Chloe Bond <b>HLTA:</b> Chelsea Armstrong <b>TLA:</b> Debbie Prout <b>TA:</b> Sandra Selley <b>MTAs:</b> Michala Smith, Adrian Jackson, Karen Finn and Nicola Roy	<b>Teacher:</b> Zoe Letten (Maternity Cover for Michelle Tomlinson) <b>HLTA:</b> Ronnie Lye <b>TLA:</b> Helen House <b>MCA:</b> Tammy Brown <b>MTAs:</b> Lorraine Chapman, Teresa Sprague, Kay Dennis	<b>Teacher:</b> Dee Bradshaw <b>HLTA:</b> Sam Woodcock <b>TLA:</b> Julie Lobb <b>TA:</b> Juliet Skillern <b>MTAs:</b> Charlotte Davey, Laura Madden, Kerstie Davies, Mel Lynch, Nicola Roy
Number of pupils: <b>4</b>	Number of pupils: <b>6</b>	Number of pupils: <b>8</b>	Number of pupils: <b>6</b>

**NB:** All staff allocations and pupil numbers were correct at time of printing and may be subject to change.

#### 1c. Timetable changes

Through discussion with the teachers and support staff, it was decided that five formal teaching inputs per day was no longer appropriate. Our pupils require ample time to transition between lessons, assist in personal hygiene and eating routines and process new information; the five-session day did not allow sufficient time for many of these essential functions to be performed and still provide effective learning in every session. The number of formal inputs per day has been reduced on class timetables to three, which allows the time required for postural management and all other mentioned routines to take place at the pace dictated by the needs and abilities of each individual pupil.

#### 1d. A Vbranch House VIEW Curriculum

In order to achieve the wide spectrum of aims and aspirations for our pupils at Vbranch House, as set out in our 'Curriculum Policy', we have begun to develop the 'Vbranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW)' Curriculum. It is important to note that the staff at Vbranch House are working hard to depart from a divided model of Education versus Therapy and subject-driven methods of teaching. We have reviewed at length the needs profile of our pupil cohorts and curriculum models used by other leading schools, we have defined three key 'domains' and seven areas of development that replace traditional 'subjects'. A broad outline of this curriculum can be seen below:



Domain	Vranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW) Curriculum						
	Communication & Cognition		Physical Development			Experience and Expression	
Areas of development	<b>Language &amp; Social communication</b>	<b>Understanding and using language</b>	<b>Self-Advocacy</b>	<b>Physical wellbeing</b>	<b>Working towards independence</b>	<b>Integrating the senses</b>	<b>Exploration &amp; creativity</b>
	Non-verbal skills Language for different purposes Cause & effect Split attention Turn taking, eye contact Initiating 'conversation' with peers Maintaining a dialogue	<b>Receptive (understanding)</b> Phonology Morphology Syntax Semantics Pragmatics <b>Expressive (using)</b> As receptive, with 'usage' imperative	Impulse control Emotional control Flexible thinking Working memory Self-monitoring/regulation Planning & prioritising Task initiation Organisation Communication aids / VOCA	Body schema/map Weight bearing Changing position Physiotherapy & OT plans Core strength Recognising & expressing pain/discomfort Endurance & dexterity Personal hygiene routines	Orientation and mobility Developing modes of movement Engaging with safe and unfamiliar places Concept of money Overcoming obstacles	Proprioception Cause & effect Residual Vision Residual hearing MSI Tactile and Haptic Smell & Taste Sensory Integration De-sensitising	Cooking Movement to music Making music Exploring art media & methods Craftwork Horticulture

For further details on the VIEW Curriculum and how this relates to the Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) and National Curriculum, please see our Curriculum Policy at <http://www.vranchouse.org/about-vranch-house/downloads/curriculum-policies/> or contact me directly for a hard copy of this policy.

### 1e. Extension to the Core Offer

With the 75% of pupils at Vranch House having a visual impairment, and at least half of these pupils having a Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI), it was agreed at Management Team level to appoint a 0.5FTE Visual Impairment Specialist Support Assistant (VISSA) to assess and meet these needs. The VISSA, Jackie Beckford, is working directly under myself, as I am also a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired (QTVI), and has been working closely with teachers and therapists. This new capacity to meet visual impairment needs of our pupils represents a new area of enhanced provision in addition to the Core Offer of Vranch House School.

### 2. Outcomes for pupils at Vranch House School

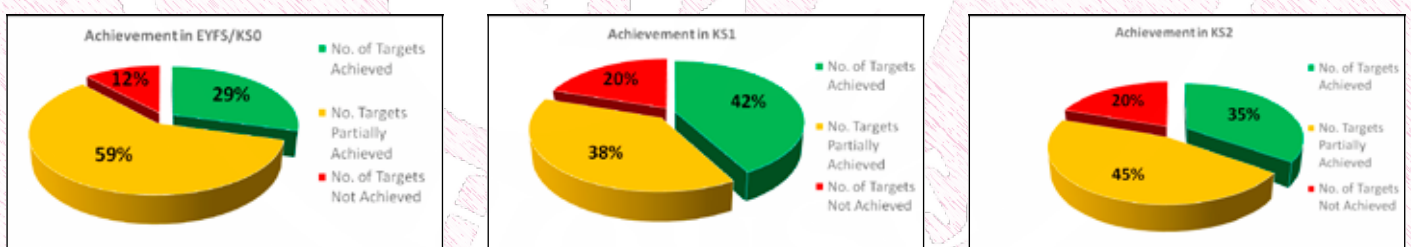
Progress and Achievement of our pupils  
Discontinuation of the P Levels form of assessment

#### 2a. Progress and Achievement of our pupils

As part of the process for drawing up the School Development Plan (see point three below), I undertook a scrutiny of the setting of targets for Annual Review and the achievement against these targets, in the academic year 2015-2016. All such targets can be assessed as having been

- 'Achieved' - all areas of the target have been met
- 'Partially Achieved' - some but not all aspects of the target have been met
- 'Not Achieved' - no aspects of the target have been met

Below are three graphical representations of the percentages of targets achieved, or otherwise, for each Key Stage cohort for the academic year 2015-2016:



What this represents on real terms is that for the last academic year, across all key stages, at least one third of all targets set were 'Achieved' by our pupils, between one third and a half of all targets set were 'Partially Achieved' and, on average, less than one in five targets were 'Not Achieved'.

Those targets 'Partially Achieved' were in-part due to mild to moderate changes in individual pupil needs and a some disruption in one key therapy that academic year. Another contributing factor to this seemingly high rate of 'Partially Achieved' targets was also in-part due to targets being phrased in such a way that they could not be met within the time frames stated e.g. the target set addressed more than one-year of potential development and was not sufficiently broken down to state the 'small step' in this development that was achievable in one academic year. Of those targets 'Not Achieved', some were due to recurrent or chronic pupil illness or the unforeseen need for some pupils to have medical intervention that rendered them unable to meet the specifics of the target.

It is my goal for the forthcoming academic year to increase the number of targets 'Achieved' and reduce the number of 'Partially Achieved' targets by working closely with the teachers to ensure all targets set are observable, focussed in term of progress anticipated and realistically achievable within an academic year (or with few exceptions, by the end of a Key Stage). I will also be working with staff to reduce the number of 'Not Achieved' targets by ensuring outcomes are not critically dependent on a pupil being in full health for the whole academic year. I have phrased these goals as action points in the School Development Plan, see item 3. Below.



## 2b. Discontinuation of the P Levels form of assessment

In 2016, the Standards & Testing Agency recommended that schools discontinue their use of the P-Levels for assessing the progress of pupils who are working below the standard of the national curriculum tests (Rochford 2016). The seven 'Aspects of Cognition and Learning' for assessment for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties (SLD/PMLD) are met by the VIEW Curriculum as detailed in the matrix below:

		VIEW Curriculum						
		Language & Social communication	Understanding & using language	Self-Advocacy	Physical wellbeing	Working towards independence	Integrating the senses	Exploration and creativity
Aspects of Cognition & Learning	Responsiveness	X	X	X	X		X	X
	Curiosity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Discovery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Anticipation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Persistence	X	X	X	X	X		
	Initiation	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Investigation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

For further details on the VIEW Curriculum please see our Curriculum Policy at;

<http://www.vranchhouse.org/about-vranch-house/downloads/curriculum-policies/> or contact me directly for a hard copy.

For further details of the final report from the Rochford Review of P Levels see;

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/561411/Rochford\\_Review\\_Report\\_v5\\_PFDA.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561411/Rochford_Review_Report_v5_PFDA.pdf)

## 2. School Development Plan

The School Development Plan (SDP) is written by the Head of Education each year after evaluating the successes, challenges and areas for improvement within the school and agreed with the Management Team. I have completed the plan for 2016/17 and this plan is divided into five key areas:

- A. Effectiveness of Leadership & Management
- B. Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- C. Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare
- D. Effectiveness of EY Provision
- E. Outcomes for Pupils.

The main points of focus for this academic year under these areas are as follows:

Area for development	Action for development
A. Effectiveness of Leadership & Management	<b>A1.</b> Establish a new cycle of Observation of T&L and Performance Management <b>A2.</b> Review Induction programme for new staff <b>A3.</b> Issue Parent, Pupil and Staff satisfaction questionnaires
B. Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment	<b>B1.</b> Sufficient challenge for pupils to be evident in planning and delivery <b>B2.</b> Increase emphasis of pupil individual learning goals across a day <b>B3.</b> Improve use of Augmented & Alternative Communication (AAC) across the school
Δ. Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare	<b>C1.</b> Improve Parental engagement with pupil education at Vbranch House <b>C2.</b> Reinstate a forum to gather Pupil Voice
E. Effectiveness of Early Years Provision	<b>D1.</b> Simplify evidence capture and collation against the EYFS
Φ. Outcomes for Pupils	<b>E1</b> Sufficient challenge for pupils to be evident in planning and delivery <b>E2.</b> EHCP Outcomes to state what the child will be able to achieve by next AR or end of KS <b>E3.</b> Increased parental and, where appropriate, pupil engagement in the composing of Outcomes

The questionnaire for parents will be issued in February 2017 and will broadly follow the Ofsted format, as per previous surveys, to gauge parental satisfaction with all we deliver here under the Core Offer at Vbranch House School.

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





**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 particularly pleased to welcome new Head of Education, Ian Norton, who is settling in extremely well at full speed.

In July 2016 two pupils left the school, one to transfer full-time to secondary education and the other to return to their native Country I wish them both well for the future. New younger children have since joined us and I look forward to getting to know them and their families through their time at Vbranch House.

Life at Vbranch House continues to be busy, there is always something new to learn, people and families to meet. 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.



*Faith and Sam peeling carrots*



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

I started work at Vbranch House in 1992 and since then have held various positions. In 2003 I became the Finance Officer. I am responsible for all the daily financial functions, salaries and record keeping.

I enjoy my work and I also enjoy working in an environment where there is always something going on, it may be listening to the children having a music 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.



**TRACEY WARD**  
**Executive PA to CEO**  
**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 Vbranch 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 Vbranch 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 Vbranch 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 Vbranch, for whatever purpose, feel welcome!





**Chloe Bond**  
Teacher - Class 1  
Joined 2011

I started working at Vranth House School in February 2011 as the Class 3 teacher. I taught Class 3 for three and a half years before moving to Class 2, who I taught for two years, and I am now enjoying my new role as the Class 1 teacher, setting myself a new challenge teaching the youngest children at Vranth House.

I trained as a primary teacher, specialising in PE, at the University of Plymouth for four years and graduated in July 2010. Whilst at university I completed my Foundation and enhancement workshops in Makaton sign language.

In my spare time I enjoy cooking, socialising with family and friends and walking with my partner and French bulldog, Claude.



**Michelle Tomlinson**  
Teacher ~ Pre-School  
Joined 2010  
(currently on Maternity leave)

**CHELSEA ARMSTRONG**  
Higher Level 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 the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) in Class 1 and am doing my foundation degree in early childhood studies.

**SANDRA SELLEY**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2007



I started working at Vranth 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.

**DEBBIE PROUT**  
Therapy & Hearing Assistant -  
Joined 1991



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

**JACKIE BECKFORD**  
Pre-School Nursery Nurse/Visual Impairment Specialist Support Assistant  
Joined 2016



I am the Nursery Nurse for our Nursery provision part-time and also the Visual Impairment Specialist Support Assistant (VISSA). I have over ten years experience of working with children and adults with additional needs and have always worked within the area of visual impairment. I have previously worked within educational, care and health settings and most recently in a school and college as part of a team assessing and meeting the needs of children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI). I am a qualified Nursery Nurse and graduated in 2012 from Plymouth University with a degree in Health and Social Care. I am currently completing my Post Graduate Diploma in the Education of Children with Vision Impairment at the University of Birmingham. I feel very proud to be part of the team at Vranth House, and I am working with the whole staff team to develop a new specialism in VI within the school.

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





**Zoe Letten**  
**Teacher - Class 2**  
**Joined 2016**

I started working at Vrach House in September 2016, covering a maternity post, teaching in class two. I have always wanted to teach children with special educational needs and was over the moon to gain the post here! I did an undergraduate degree in Education Studies at Bath Spa University between 2008 and 2011, which secured my passion for teaching. After gaining some experience in a local nursery leading their baby room, and at the Exeter Steiner Academy as a one to one support assistant for a little boy with Cerebral Palsy, I went on to do my PGCE at Plymouth University to gain my teaching qualification. Since then I have been working in a number of schools doing supply teaching and working in a temporary Early Years teaching post in Crediton. In my spare time I enjoy going for walks with the dogs, cooking and shopping!

**TAMMY BROWN**  
**Health Care Assistant**  
**Joined 2008**



I have been working at Vrach House since 2008, prior to which I worked within early years settings. I am currently working in Class 2 as a 1:1 HCA. I also help out the school nurses with the healthcare needs of the children at Vrach.

Working within the multi-disciplinary team and with all of the amazing children is very rewarding.

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



I started working at Vrach House in 2004 as a Lunch-Time Support Assistant becoming a part-time Teaching Assistant in September 2010 and then a Therapy and Learning Assistant in April 2016. I have gained my level 3 Diploma for Children & Young People's Workforce and level 1 Makaton Signing.

**RONNIE LYE**  
**Higher Level Teaching**  
**Assistant**  
**Joined 1995**



Since I joined Vrach 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.



*Maddie looking at her reflection in the mirror*





**Deborah Bradshaw**  
(Dee)  
Teacher ~ Class 3  
Joined 2002

I started at Vranh House in October 2002 as a qualified Nursery Nurse with a BTEC National Certificate in Childhood Studies (July 1998) but have since gained a Diploma in Child Psychology (July 2003) and a BA (Hons) Degree in Early Childhood Studies (June 2008). I then completed a graduate teaching programme with Dorset and gained qualified teacher status with an outstanding grade in June 2010. I have since achieved a Post Graduate Certificate in Education. My other qualifications are Total Communication Level 1 in signing (January 2009) and I am an appointed person for paediatric first aid. I have been fortunate enough to have experience of working in all three classes and I am currently working in class 3.

**SAMANTHA WOODCOCK**  
Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2016



I started work at Vranh House in 2016 as a teaching assistant/lunch-time assistant having previously worked as an enabler/respite carer helping with life skills.

I am epilepsy trained and currently studying BSL signing.

I have been overwhelmed by the kind and friendly atmosphere since commencing my post at Vranh House and I am looking forward to many years of learning and sharing experiences.

**JULIET SKILLERN**  
1:1 Teaching Assistant  
Joined 2016



I joined Vranh House in April 2016 as a lunch-time support assistant but now work as a one-to-one teaching assistant. I loved my lunch-times with the children but am really enjoying the opportunity to work so closely with one child as part of a team.

**JULIE LOBB**  
Therapy & Learning  
Assistant  
Joined 2005



I joined Vranh House School in 2005 as a lunch-time support assistant, helped in hydrotherapy and ran a crèche. In 2010 I became a Teaching Assistant and gained a level 3 diploma in Children & Young People Workforce. I have always been interested in visual impairment and have done a little training in this as well as doing a small group session each week. I have worked in all three classes and learnt so much about the children, no two days are the same.

More recently I have slightly changed my role, I am now a Therapy & Learning Assistant; I am still in class as normal but I am also the go-between Therapy and Class ensuring the children have the postural management they need.

It is a real privilege to work at Vranh alongside a wonderful team.





*Ginny Humphreys*  
*Clinical Director*  
*Joined 1987*



*Kate Moss*  
*Head of Therapies*  
*Joined 2000*

The Therapy Department at Vrach House strives to provide a fast and efficient service for the children referred for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and to the AAC Service. The practice is constantly evolving to ensure that the changing needs of the growing referral population can be met in the optimal way. As part of our drive to deliver an excellent service we have further developed our data analysis methods to enable us to identify trends, and to deploy our workforce in the most effective manner. Keeping a close eye on the constantly changing referral trends plays a key part in the department maintaining low waiting times.

The Therapy Department strives to deliver a patient-focussed service, listening to the desires of the children and their families, as well as working closely with any other medical professionals who may be involved in an individual child's care.

The work of the Therapy Department covers a wide remit, including:

- Providing Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy for the Vrach House School pupils, via Therapists and Therapy Assistants.
- Daily Outpatient Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy assessments and review appointments.
- Physiotherapy work within the neonatal unit at the RD&E Hospital.
- Delivering Fun Fit (gross motor skills) training to staff in mainstream schools throughout Devon.
- Vrach House runs the Paediatric Physiotherapy Service in North Devon.
- The Therapy Department works closely with professionals in the wider multi-disciplinary paediatric team to ensure that patients receive a child-centred, individually appropriate, and effective episode of care.
- Holding regular training days for professionals at Vrach House and within children's services.

We aim for the service to remain flexible to the needs of the children referred to us, and to continue to have the shortest waiting times in Devon children's services.

## **HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICE**

Through regular team meetings, peer and management supervision and the charities investment in continued professional development we pride ourselves on delivering a high quality of service. Ginny in her role as Clinical Director has ensured that our practice is in line with NICE clinical guidelines and up to date, participating and in some areas leading in research and new developments.

Again my thanks go to the complete therapy team for working hard on new initiatives, thinking outside the box, pure hard work and showing continued commitment to the children and their families we serve.

Kate Moss  
Head of Therapies



*Poppy dressed as a cat for fancy dress day*



# 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 Vranth House clinics.

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



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



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

I joined Vranth House School in January 2011 and having spent some time working in the Vranth House School I moved to work at Honeylands Specialist Assessment Centre, where I work with children aged 0-5. Following my Bobath neurodevelopmental training in 2013 I have sought out opportunities to work with children in this field, and I have a particular interest in early brain development and early intervention. I work on the neonatal unit where myself and my colleagues treat children born prematurely, or who have had birth complications. We then run a variety of clinics, outpatient assessments and groups for any children aged 0-5 that need support with their physical development.

In 2015, I was given an amazing opportunity to join a team of engineers, neurologists and medics to design and build a dynamic seat for children with dystonic Cerebral Palsy. This group of children find it particularly hard to sit in conventional specialist seating, which subsequently affects their ability to play, explore and learn and so this work is extremely important to our team. My secondment has been fully supported by Vranth House, and through this collaboration we have built strong relationships with specialist movement disorder centres and hospitals across the country. Over the past two years, we have worked closely with children with dystonic Cerebral Palsy and their families, and it is wonderful to have children from Honeylands and Vranth House involved in this project. We hope that in the not too distant future, our work will help to improve quality of life for many children living with this condition.





**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 Vranch 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 Vranch.



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

I have been a member of the Vranch 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 - Practice Manager - Joined 2012**

I started work in the Vranch House Therapy Department at the beginning of 2012, having had some prior experience of the broad range of services offered by Vranch House as a volunteer. I became Clinical Administration Team Lead in October 2014, and then Practice Manager in 2017, as my role evolved to encompass more data management and statistical analysis. Interacting daily with the Vranch House School pupils, the Therapy Department outpatients, and the hard working and enthusiastic team of Vranch House staff, makes for an enjoyable and rewarding workplace.



**VICKI BEATTIE - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2015**

I joined Vranch House at the end of September 2015. I have been working within the Educational sector since 2005 gaining various qualifications and running my own Nursery Class for two years. Since being at Vranch House I have been responsible for the Rebound Therapy sessions in school, and I continue to support and assist Liz (Physiotherapist) in physiotherapy assessments and specific therapeutic activities.



**GEORGINA HERBERT - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2008**

I started work at Vranch House in September 2008 initially as a lunch-time support assistant, prior to this I worked at a mainstream primary school in Exeter. I have completed my First Aid and Makaton Signing Level 1. I have experience in all classes and I now work as a Therapy Assistant mainly leading the Hydrotherapy Groups. Each day provides a new challenge and this is why I like working at Vranch House.



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

I am excited to be working back in School and outpatient hydrotherapy after taking a year off on maternity leave.

**LYDIA KINGDOM - Therapy Administration Assistant - Joined 2017**

I started at Vranch House in August 2016 and I work on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Prior to this, I worked for the NHS for over seven years in various administrative roles and I hope to bring my experience to my role at Vranch.



**THE ELLEN TINKHAM TEAM**

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



We work as part of the wider team of Vranch 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 2017



Charlotte Thomas



Sarah Stone



Rhiannon Powell

Vranch's North Devon Team is based at Barnstaple Health Centre.

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

Caroline joined our team in October 2016 and is already a valued member. Another change was brought about by the happy occasion of one of the physiotherapists getting married. Rhiannon Bennett is in the process of changing her name to Mrs Powell, something we are all finding hard to get used to!

2016 brought changes to the Children's Orthotic Service in North Devon. This service is provided by North Devon District Hospital who employ the specialist orthotist. Historically the Children's Physiotherapy Team had been providing administration and assistance for all these clinics despite not being funded. With a growing number of children using this service, this support had become unsustainable.



*Barnstaple Health Centre Christmas Decoration Competition Winners (left to right); Caroline Bricknell, Administrator; Sally Bunney, Team Leader; Gemma Rous, Specialist Children's Physiotherapy*

With the hospital taking back responsibility they are able to use the orthotic clinics more effectively. Families can now book appointments directly which they are finding more helpful. We continue to work closely with the Orthotist Tim Constantine, arranging to see children together for joint assessment and discussion where concerns are complex. His advice and support is highly valued by all.

The Children's Physiotherapy team continue to 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

Exeter Mobility Centre, the Wheelchair Service offer clinics for children at Pathfield Special School on a termly basis. This allows families to be seen with their Physiotherapist if required in a local setting their child is familiar with. These clinics are additional to the monthly general clinics EMC provide at Barnstaple and Bideford Hospitals and in Exeter.

A wide variety of conditions are treated by the physiotherapy team, these include;

- 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)

With parental consent, referrals are accepted from all professionals involved with a child. In addition parents and carers are able to contact our team directly to request advice if they have concerns.

The Children’s Physiotherapy Team liaise and work closely with parents, the child and all professionals involved in their care. Making parents, carers and children feel supported and central to our service is paramount.



*Nina Darke*  
Orthotist

## Orthotics

Orthotics is a speciality involving using external devices (‘orthoses’) to support the body. The aims can be to improve posture, function and mobility, or to manage pain or deformity. The orthoses most commonly used for children are insoles, splints, footwear, spinal jackets and helmets.

An appointment with an Orthotist will involve discussing what needs the child has, what they have tried in the past and if an orthosis might be helpful. If an orthosis is prescribed, measurements and sometimes a plaster cast, will be taken. The finished item will then either be supplied by the Orthotist at a further appointment or by the child’s Physiotherapist.

## 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. Our aim is to offer a friendly point of contact and support. 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 3 months.
- Weighing and monitoring growth.
- 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, 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. If we do not know the answer we can find someone to ask.

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**

I qualified with my BSc(Hons) degree in Occupational Therapy in July 2000, having studied in Cardiff. Following a couple of years working in mental health I chose to work in Paediatrics from 2002 and was pleased to join the team at Vranth House in 2012.

Much has happened in the four and a half years, I now enjoy leading the occupational therapy team and we have a team of four therapists.

Laura is currently on maternity leave and we have been joined by Lucy Abbs, a newly qualified OT, since July 2016. Lucy has settled quickly into the team and has enjoyed the challenge. Helen North continues to provide a great service to our children within Vranth House School and also delivers the specialist wheelchair service, an essential role.

Working at Vranth House continues to be rewarding and I am looking forward to many new opportunities ahead.



**LUCY ABBS**

**Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2016**

Prior to training as an Occupational Therapist I have had a varied, exciting career. I worked in musical theatre and taught acting, singing and dance to all ages. I saw a wide range of physical, psychosocial and developmental conditions and was able to use theatre to help develop life skills such as concentration, confidence, communication and coordination while having fun. I have spent several years travelling and working all over the world in many different settings. This included an occupational therapy internship in India where my time was split between a government hospital, a developing school for children with disabilities and paediatric sensory clinic. I am passionate about working in paediatrics and keen to develop my knowledge. I am extremely grateful to Vranth House for providing me with a fantastic opportunity to use my skills.



**LAURA KAIKOURA - Specialist Paediatric Occupational Therapist - Joined 2015**

Currently on maternity leave.

## Specialist Wheelchair Service



**HELEN NORTH - Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined 2015**

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.

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:

1. There is a clearly identified need for a specialist wheelchair to facilitate access to the educational curriculum appropriate to the pupil concerned;
2. The request cannot be met by SEN funding for the school pupil concerned;

**And one of the following two criteria also applies;**

3. There is an identified need for a powered and a specialist manual wheelchair but the NHS will only fund one wheelchair;
4. There is a difference of opinion between parents and mobility centres regarding the model of wheelchair that best 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



**Denise Hutchinson**  
Speech & Language Teaching Assistant  
Joined 1989

Michelle Weick now leads the Speech and Language Therapy service at Vranth house and is assisted by Denise Hutchinson. Together they are responsible for speech and language therapy provision for the children who attend Vranth House School and the High Technology AAC service which supports children across Devon.

The team continues to focus on creating a total communication approach and environment at Vranth House School and embed this into daily life at Vranth house. 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.

The team work very closely with the children within their class based sessions which is great for ensuring the children have all the communication resources they need throughout the school day.



**Michelle Weick**  
Specialist Speech & Language Consultant  
Joined 2017

We are working closely with the community Speech and Language team and Bristol Communication Team to update the referral pathways within AAC to allow smooth transition between services.

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

## Lunchtime Assistants



**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.



**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.



**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.



**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.



## Lunchtime Assistants



### **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 - Lunchtime/Support Assistant - Joined 2015**

I joined Vranth House in 2015 as a lunchtime support assistant and to help in the hydrotherapy sessions.

The staff have been very welcoming and the children an absolute delight to meet and get to know.



### **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 whenever 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.



### **NICOLA ROY - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2016**

My employment with Vranth House began in September 2016 as a lunchtime support assistant and helping in Class 3 for three afternoons a week. It is a wonderful experience to work and play alongside the children, they are so happy and the position is a rewarding one. The staff here are so dedicated to the children and all very helpful.



### **KAY DENNIS - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2016**

I started working at Vranth House in September 2016. Having a son with cerebral palsy inspired me to want to work with children with additional needs, so when I got the job at Vranth I was delighted. I currently work with the children as a lunch-time support assistant. Everyone has made me feel so welcome and the children are a pleasure to be with.



### **LAURA MADDEN - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2016**

I started working at Vranth House in April 2016 as a lunch-time support assistant and I also help out with the swimming sessions. I enjoy working with the staff and children everyday and the atmosphere here is lovely.



### **MELANIE LYNCH - Lunchtime Support Assistant**

I was a student here at Vranth many years ago from the age of 2 to 12 years which I enjoyed! I have been volunteering at Vranth for over ten years and I am now also a permanent lunchtime support assistant two days a week. I have lots of fun and love spending time doing different activities with the children and staff.

## Kitchen Staff

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.

Our work is very rewarding. To see a child who has difficulty eating enjoy their tasters is priceless.

Jean Penn & Dawn Street





## Various Roles



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

Having spent twenty-eight 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 since 2011 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 Vranth House 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, etc.)

Some of the projects that I have been working on over the last twelve months have been to help with the refurbishment of the learning resource room to a new therapy assessment room which also meant my own relocation to the Optec workshop. During the year I have also made the eye gaze work on a tablet pc.



*Doug Steer  
Caretaker -  
Joined 1978*



*Poppy with Father Christmas and his helpers*



## Marketing Manager's Report



**Andrew Barge**  
**Marketing Manager**

This year has been another fantastic year for Vranth 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

2015-16.

- 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.
- J Wippell and Co for their continued support.
- Moto in the Community Trust for their continued support.
- Exeter Family Welfare Association for their continued support.
- Mr Clarke and C Jones of Bristol for their continued support and fundraising £550.
- St Paul's church in Newton Abbot for their donation of £189.
- The Launceston Brotherhood for their donation of £1,000.
- Michael Roberts for his donation of £120.
- Mr & Mrs Piper for their donation of £465.
- Philip Marsh from Chatham Ltd for his donation of £7,500 from his Help4Henry fundraiser.
- Rotary Club Exmouth for their donation of £416.
- WPS Ltd for their donation of £250.
- Original Style Ltd for their donation of £1,000 and Christmas chocolates for staff and pupils.
- Krispies of Exmouth for raising £5,413 by donating a day's takings from sales of fish and chips.

All donations during this year have been put towards our fundraising initiative for the redevelopment of hydrotherapy pool.

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



*A kind donation of £100  
from the Foresters Friendly Society*



*A generous donation of £250  
from our insurers WPS Ltd*



*Krispies of Exmouth very kindly donated a day's takings to Vranth House by selling over 1,500 portions of fish and chips and raised £5,412.31!*



# Fact Sheet

## What is Vranth 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?

Vranth 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 twenty-eight children and treat over 2,000 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 four 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 over 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 July 2015 said: *"All pupils achieve well over time, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy, because of good teaching and the strong teamwork between education and therapy staff. The school has continued to improve well since the last inspection. Pupils love coming to school because of their close relationships with staff and the exciting range of learning activities on offer. Staff are very committed to pupils' well-being and take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal development so that behaviour is outstanding. Provision for the early years is outstanding, so that children make an excellent start to their school career."*



Chelsea, Sam, Chloe, Laura and Zoe dress up for World Book Day





## **Vranch House**

**Pinhoe Road, Exeter, EX4 8AD**

**Telephone: 01392 468333**

**[www.vranchhouse.org](http://www.vranchhouse.org)**