

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2010 AGM

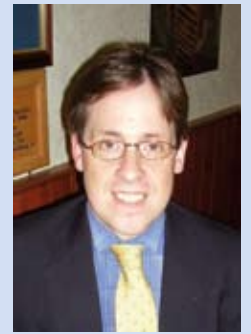
This is my fifth report to an Annual General Meeting as Chairman of the Society. It's my pleasure to report that the school and centre continue to flourish in what has been a very difficult and challenging environment. As in previous years the school and centre continue to maintain their excellence in all that they do in delivering our core services. Allied to that is the recognition that we live in changing times and we stand still at our peril and so we always need to look at how we might do things better. Our partners in education and health look to us as experts in our field who consistently exceed expectations and it is in recognition of this that we have been so successful.

Indeed in the not too distant past the future of Vranth House was potentially at great risk due to the changing political and economic climate. Had we not been such an outstanding organisation we may well not be sat here this evening celebrating our continued existence and strength. As ever my thanks go to the management team and their staff for leading us through the choppy waters of the last twelve months. We are of course not through the economic storm that engulfs all of us and so for Vranth House to be able to report such a healthy set of financial figures is quite remarkable and something to be rightly celebrated.

I'd like, if I may, to reflect on two events that have happened over the year. One is still ongoing; you will have seen it in the car park! More of that later. The other significant event this year was the retirement of Maureen Boon as Head teacher. Maureen served Vranth House for 18 years. Throughout that time she showed continual dedication, professionalism and passion for all the children who were fortunate to benefit from her teaching. I know that all those children will have left or will leave Vranth House with the best possible building blocks that they could wish to have as a result of her contribution to their schooling. Maureen all of us at Vranth House owe you a huge debt of gratitude. I'm delighted to say that Maureen has left such a positive impression on Vranth House that we were able to appoint from within to replace her. In Jane Parsons I know we have the perfect person to step into that role and continue to maintain and develop our high standards in education. The transition has been seamless in my view and I'm delighted that Maureen will continue to work with Jane as an advisor to the school. I would also at this stage like to welcome Michelle Woodgates who has joined us as the new class 1 teacher. I wish her a long and successful time here at Vranth House. Our congratulations to our Head of Therapy, Ginny Humphreys, who has gained a doctorate, to Sandy Chenore, our teacher in Class 3 who has been awarded an Msc and to Dee Down who came to us as a Nursery Nurse and is now a fully qualified teacher with two degrees behind her and a Master's degree in the offing.

The other major event of this year is the current

building of the new Children's Specialist Assessment Centre that you will see rising from the grounds outside. This is a reflection of the strength of the partnership we have been at pains to develop with the NHS and Devon County Council and it will secure our future as a provider of first rate clinical care to disabled children in the area. Now of course we pride ourselves here at Vranth House with our attitude of "just getting on with things" but I can assure you that this venture has been anything but straight forward. There have been many parties who have an interest in this development and many complex discussions have been had and many complex agreements have had to be drawn up. As with all times of change there has been some unease amongst groups and individuals who may be affected by these changes.



Chairman
Andrew Barge

At all times I've been assured of the progression of the development by our Chief Executive. I have complete confidence that without his hard work, diligence and foresight this opportunity would not have come to fruition in the way that it has. He has skilfully brought all the stakeholders together and in his usual way led from the front with great ability and energy. I would also like to record our thanks to the Honeylands League of Friends who introduced us to our benefactor, Sir Li Ka Shing of Cheung King Holdings and to Hutchison Whampoa who have supported the project. I know that this extraordinary development will only further enhance the already excellent reputation of Vranth House.

Of course we cannot ignore the current economic conditions; I've been warning of that for over two years now. We have staff working for us who in effect have taken a pay cut due the 0% settlement from both our health and education partners. I can assure them that we deeply value their continued loyalty to Vranth House and the management team I know will continue to do everything they can to reward that loyalty and dedication. However, we have to recognise that we will more than likely be asked to do more for less for some time to come. I have a great deal of confidence that we can do that, but some changes to what we have done in the past may be inevitable. As I say every year, our ability to provide excellent services with a high value for money to the taxpayer will become ever more important. I remain, as always, confident that Vranth House will respond to that challenge.

I finished my report last year saying that I could not promise that this year's report would be as positive as last year's. Well, I believe given the current constraints it is equally positive, if not more so.

Through our hard work, skill and passion we have had another remarkable year of achievement. My thanks go to each and every one of you for making it possible.

Andrew Barge
Chairman

Annual Trustees' Report

Report of the Directors and Trustees for the year ending 31st of March 2010 - Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charity limited by guarantee (Registered Number 2599511), incorporated on the 9th of April 1991, and an independent charity (Registered Number 1002700) registered with the Charity Commission on the 15th of May 1991. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Instrument of Management. Any person over the age of 18 can become a member of the charity on payment of an annual fee of £2 (for those not in work) or £5 (for those in employment). There are currently 77 members each of whom are liable to the extent of their membership fee in the event of the company being wound up. All members have the right to vote at General Meetings.

Appointment of Trustees

The number of Trustees can be set at any General Meeting but has never varied from a mean of 12 between the minimum of 8 and maximum of 16 stated in the Governing Document. Invitations to nominate Trustees are circulated every year to the membership and the senior one-third of the Trustees must resign and seek re-election every year at the Annual General Meeting. The senior officers (Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer) 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 for use in 2010 alongside a more formal induction and training process. Trustees are usually appointed because of specialist skills but the charity will meet any identified need for specialist training.

Organisation

The Board of the Society has strategic oversight of the charity and meets three times a year. The Board establishes all policy for the general direction and operation of the charity and meets to review those policies and to hear a record of operations. The Board employs a Chief Executive to work with a Head Teacher and Head of Therapy to oversee, direct and drive forward the Board's policies for the School and the Clinic (the principal operations of the charity). The Chief Executive has delegated powers for the day-to-day operation of the Board's policies for employment, finance, contracts, legal compliance (including Equal Opportunities), buildings and acquisitions, risk assessment and mitigation, Health and Safety and business development. To assist the Head Teacher and meet statutory obligations for maintained schools, the Board has established a Board of Governors for the school. The Board of Governors has direct control of those matters bearing on the delivery of educational services; matters relating to finance, employment and resources, if not within the competence of the Governors, are referred to the Board of Trustees. The Head of Therapy is responsible to the Trustees for the full delivery of the clinical contract which includes professional and service delivery standards. In this she is assisted by the Chief Executive who retains direct control of all matters relating to the contract.

Related Parties

The Society has formal and informal arrangements and relationships with many other statutory and voluntary bodies. Principal amongst these is the Service Level Agreement with NHS Devon for the provision of NHS clinical services in Devon. The Society also has a formal relationship with the County Council Local Education Authority which allows for the assessment of potential pupils, the formulation and issue of Statements of Special Educational Needs, the placement of pupils, the review of pupil development, and the delivery of clinical services and for fixed funding.

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 Dream-A-Way, Whizz Kids, Children in Need, CEDA, A Brighter Tomorrow, Exeter Stroke Club 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 Honeylands League of Friends for reasons more fully described elsewhere in this report. 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 Health and

Safety and Fire Risk Assessments are translated into operating policies which are available to all employees. 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 handicapped people.
- ii) Advising, helping or catering for the needs of the parents or others having the care of handicapped people.

The core activities arising from these aims are the education of children with physical difficulties from the age of 2 to 12 at Vranth House School and the provision of paediatric therapy and clinical treatment to children as outpatients at locations throughout Devon. The charity has also developed Opportunity Technology, a not-for-profit service which designs and installs assisted mobility tracks and robotic vehicles throughout England and Wales.

Public Benefit – General Statement

The Trustees have established a policy to review continuously all the charity's activities and the development of services to ensure that they remain consonant with the requirements of the 2006 Charities Act, and particularly with Section 4 of the Act, (the need to demonstrate Public Benefit). The charity operates in partnership with statutory bodies under guidance from the Office for the Third Sector in order to provide expertise, treatment and enhanced services to children with physical disabilities. It does not charge fees but receives about 70% of the total cost of the services it provides from NHS Devon and Devon County Council. Referrals to the service are made by Local Authorities and all referrals are seen for assessment and the majority of assessed referrals are retained for treatment or given a place in the school. The referral process, whether as a therapy outpatient or potential school pupil, is not controlled by the charity but by NHS Devon and Devon County Council. A school placement or therapy intervention might be deemed inappropriate at the assessment stage but only for reasons that are cogent, demonstrable and compliant with benchmarked national practice. The charity is as public a body as its statutory partners and enters into no private arrangements for individual treatment. No member of the public is denied the services provided by the charity provided those services are assessed to be suitable and appropriate for the individual concerned.

Public Benefit - Aims and Strategies

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

- **School Aim** The school is to be organised, equipped, staffed, managed and operated to the highest national standards.
 - **Strategy to Achieve Aim** The Governing Body will monitor the established Continuous Improvement Programme and the School Audit Cycle with the intention of maintaining the OFSTED grading of "outstanding" achieved in 2009.
- **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 allowed for normal maintenance and some improvement but which also aimed at developing a surplus for the following year. The major components of the £51,336 spend were:

- A new heating and hot water boiler plant offering much improved control and an estimated reduction in running costs of 30%.
- Powered awnings for each of the three classrooms which are remotely controlled and automatically retract in unsafe winds (this enables full compliance with the Ofsted requirement that children should have access to a protected outdoor play space).
- Surveys and Feasibility Study for a new Child Assessment Centre.

Service delivery remained at the same high levels as the preceding 6 years with 26 children on the school roll and over 1,100 children on the clinical list. The



*Visit to Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club, Sandy Park Stadium.
Back Row Exeter Chiefs: Charlie Walker-Blair (Winger), Neil Clark (Hooker)
and Mark Twiggs (Strength & Rehab Coach)*

uptake on provided services has been very encouraging, with growth in every area of activity and, particularly, out-reach work and training courses provided as part of our new funding arrangement for the school. The tenants of the old residential hostel at Hill Barton House are now holding over on a concluded three year lease. This is acceptable to the Trustees because it offers the charity maximum flexibility for the generation of either capital or revenue income.

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

The Trustees are pleased to report the effectiveness of the charity's ongoing and significant investment in Continuous Professional Development for its staff. All the teachers are engaged in programmes leading to Master's degrees and the school is one of a very few in the country in which all its Teaching Assistants are qualified to at least GQAL Grade 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. Nevertheless, around 50% of the operating costs are being recovered through maintenance activity and some new installations.

Plans for Future Periods

The charity has operated its clinical services under a contract with the NHS for the provision of paediatric therapies in the community and this contract is now holding over pending the negotiation of a unified contract jointly funded by Devon County Council and NHS Devon. The Memorandum of Agreement which framed the charity's service and financial arrangements with the Local Education Authority is holding over pending the same re-negotiation. The planned date for the inception of this new Service Led Agreement is October 2010.

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

The charity has been invited to extend its strategic partnership with the Commissioners for Children's Services (NHS Devon and Devon County Council) by funding and building a new Specialist Child Assessment Centre. This will involve the negotiation of two leases; one to regularise the status of Vranth House within its present boundaries on land transferred from the NHS to the ownership of the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust and the other to extend that lease to incorporate development land for the new build. The charity was introduced by the Honeylands League of Friends to a generous overseas donor who has accepted a formal application backed by an architectural Feasibility Study and QS estimate and will commit £1m to the new building. It is anticipated that planning permission will be applied for in April 2010 and that the building works will start in July of the same year. The new combined contract will incorporate a range of existing and some new services. It will be drafted to permit future development to match the strategic aim of widening the range and increasing the availability of the services provided by the charity so that they encompass the whole of Devon.

The onset of the present recession and its effect on investment in public services

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

Financial Review

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income for the year ending the 31st of March 2010 of £1,255,887 (£1,401,871 in 2009). The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £865,647 (a commendable increase of £29,696 on the total of £835,951 for 2009). £97,126 of the Total Funds is in Restricted Funds of which the largest part, £80,017, is Fixed Assets. The Society has tangible Fixed Assets of £791,118 (£828,237 in 2009) and Total Funds Employed of £1,656,765 (£1,664,188 in 2009). £475,000 of the Fixed Assets is the market valuation of Hill Barton House as of March 2009. Although the accounts show a loss of £7,423 this is after a Depreciation charge of £92,712 (a non-monetary expense). Without Depreciation, the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £85,289.

Important transactions in the year include the contract income of £677,379 from NHS Devon in respect of the outpatient and clinical work. Total income from charitable (not contracted) and all other sources was £143,166, compared with a total of £340,774 in 2009, the difference of £197,608 being roughly the amount generated by the fund-raising campaign for the "Big Build" (£100,107) in 2009 combined with decreases in income from fundraising, OpTech, legacies and bank interest. The income from school fees developed much as predicted to a sum of £435,342 compared with £425,969 in the preceding year.

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

Reserves policy

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

Investment Policy

The Memorandum and Articles provide the Trustees with the power to make investments as they choose but consonant with current Charity Commission advice. The charity's cash assets are spread between the Business Reserve and two Mutual Society investment accounts in accord with the stated policy of low-risk diversity.

Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

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

- (a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- (b) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- (c) prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Charity will continue in operation.

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

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

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

Compliance

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

Auditors

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

Approval

This report was approved by the Board of the Society (the Board of Directors and Trustees) on the 9th of November 2010 and signed on its behalf.

A Barge
Chairman

November 2010



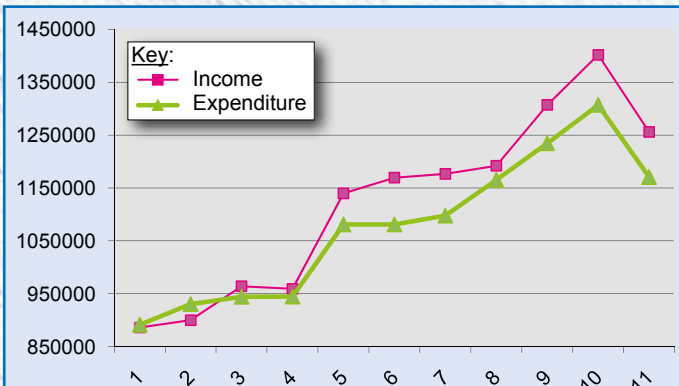
Colonel Wheeler,
Chief Executive
Joined 1993

Chief Executive's Report Financial Information

Financial Information abstracted from the Audited Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2010

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2009/2010 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 fell as predicted from £1,401,871 to £1,255,887 not only as a result of the recession but also because the figures for the previous two years (2009 and 2008) had been inflated by the income from the "Big Build" fundraising campaign. With depreciation we had a loss of £7,423 but actually had a cash surplus of £85,289 with the non-monetary expense of depreciation discounted.
- Debtors were reduced to £34,162 from £62,023 in 2009.
- The fourth operating year of Optech – our service for designing, manufacturing and installing the assisted mobility trackway and vehicles – has been very successful but is understandably influenced by fiscal disciplines in the economy at large. Activity levels remain quite high but in small and less remunerative contracts
- We have maintained the high number of pupils in the school and outpatients seen by the clinic whilst continuing



Notes: The Auditor's Report for 2009/10 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.

investment in the buildings at Vranth House and in the Inclusion and IT services.

The Trustees agreed a programme of capital investments for the Financial Year which provided for the installation of a new heating and hot water plant, for powered awnings for each of the three classrooms, for a re-build of the website and for surveys and an architectural feasibility study for the new Specialist Children's Assessment Centre.

Future Plans

The charity's strategic objective for the next five years is to establish, embody and develop a new partnership with Devon County Council and the NHS. The immediate objective is to complete the construction of a brand new £1.2m Specialist Children's Assessment Centre to replace the old Honeylands and to purchase the freehold title to the land on which this development and Vranth House sit. In the interim we will complete negotiations on leases and licenses with the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust to facilitate the new build. Negotiations with NHS Devon and Devon County Council on a new unified contract for all Vranth House services continues with a target inception date of April 2011. This work is not simply a matter of establishing a contract for existing services but seeks to incorporate some significant future developments in our voluntary/statutory partnership.

Graeme Wheeler
Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account

ELEMENT	2010	2009	2008
Gross Income	1255887	1401871	1307032
Gross Expenditure	1170598	1262089	1234525
Gain/Loss for the Year	85289	64782	72507
Net Current Assets as at 1 April	865647	835951	787055

Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a percentage of	2010	2009	2008	2007
Funds employed:	2%	4%	3.85%	5.23%
Creditors as a Percentage of:				
Current Assets	5.50%	4%	2.90%	5.47%
As a Percentage of Total Assets (Funds Employed):				
Profit / Loss for the Year	5%	4%	4.53%	1.75%
Administration Costs	2.5%	3%	3.25%	5.23%
Profit if no elective spend	9%	14%	6.35%	7.30%

Notes: 1. The recommended methods for calculating Administrative Costs changed in 2005.

Headteacher's Annual Report



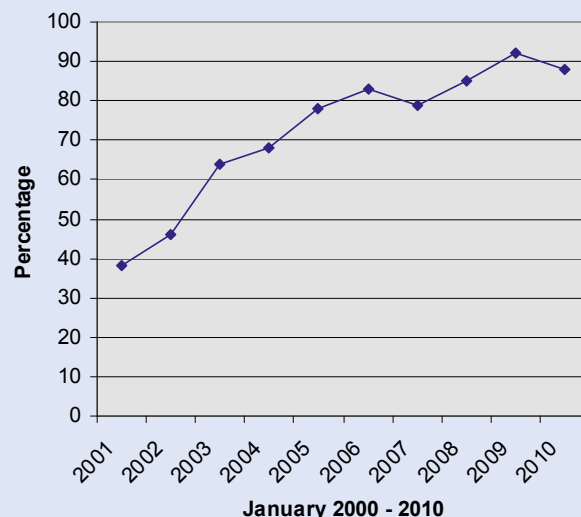
Jane Parsons
Head Teacher
Joined 2004

**Academic Year:
September 2009
to July 2010**

1) What have been our successes this year?

- In July 2010 Class 3 took three Year 6 children and 1 Year 5 child on a three day residential trip to Churchtown Farm. The visit was a great success, enjoyed by all. A short film of the visit is included on our School website.
- The automated canopies outside each classroom, which were included in our plan, have been installed during this year.
- We have continued training for mainstream teachers and TAs in association with Devon LA by running moving and handling courses.
- Our inclusion service continues to develop and become a focal point within the school. (See chart to right) We are now extending the service to include our class teachers visiting mainstream colleagues.
- The ongoing speech and language training in Makaton and communication skills for all staff continues and is regularly monitored and updated.
- The school has raised funds for the Pakistan Flood Appeal, Breakthrough Breast Cancer Awareness and Living Paintings which has been our chosen charity.
- The Family Network has been renamed and re-launched as Vbranch Chats, a group that invited speakers, on a range of topics into school to support parents, children and families with practical advice and guidance.
- The school council continues to generate ideas for improvements which include links with the community, increased visits to the inclusive playpark and fundraising discos twice in a week to ensure that all children can enjoy the fun and fundraising.
- The school underwent a satisfactory Child Safeguarding Audit, carried out by the Local Authority.
- Links have been firmly established with the charity Whizz-Kidz, which has included football skills and powered wheelchair skills workshops.
- We have begun working with Exeter University and other Special Schools in Devon to develop teacher training links.
- Introduction of Personal Education Plans and Policy to address the needs of children who miss significant amounts of school time due to illness. For example, fifteen consecutive days or more.
- Introduction of Music Therapy within school.
- Training to provide additional support for pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
- Looking at the possibility of creating a sensory room in our resources room. There will be a large cost implication with this project as we will have to relocate our resources and the project cannot begin until the new Assessment Centre has been built.
- Training to enable a Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired within school. A mandatory requirement for all schools teaching children with visual impairments.

Percentage of Pupils Included in Mainstream Settings



Eighty-eight percent of pupils were included in mainstream schools on shared placements in January 2010. This is a slight decrease on last year's figure of ninety-two percent and this is due to the arrival in school of new children who are not attending mainstream school at present due to their complex medical difficulties. We also have two children who have moved from Early Years to Key Stage 1 for whom mainstream inclusion is not appropriate at present.

2) What are we trying to improve?

Whole School Priorities for 2010 – 2011

- Develop Curriculum Planning – linking whole school curriculum to Early Learning Goals
- Develop access to Physical Education throughout school during class and lunchtime activities
- Inclusion – increase contact and liaison between mainstream schools and Vbranch House School
- Integrate the use of Developmental Journals within school assessment procedures
- Streamline target setting within school

3) How much progress do pupils make?

Pupils at Vbranch House School make good progress when their baseline achievements are taken into account. The following section describes the results for Foundation, Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments during 2009/10. The results are compared to targets set two years previously.

Foundation Stage Assessment

The results of the Foundation Stage Assessment show a broad range of abilities this is demonstrated by the results for the six children assessed in 2010.

In the national data for 2009 the majority of children are shown to be working securely within the early learning goals for all assessment areas - 6 points or more. Only one pupil was working securely within the early learning goals in two areas. Most pupils are working towards early learning goals in the majority of subjects with four out of five working within the early learning goals for at least one subject. This reflects the intake at the school with pupils working at a range of levels from developmental to within the normal range in some assessment areas.

4) How have our results changed over time?

At Key Stage 1 pupils achieve a range of scores from working towards level 1 and level 2.

At Key Stage 2 there has been an overall decline in the levels achieved. This is because pupils who achieve higher levels at Key Stage 1, have by year 6 been fully included in their local mainstream schools. The remaining Key Stage 2 children have been typically working at P levels or Level 1 and 2 and mainly moving on to specialist secondary provision.

	PSED			CLL				PSRN			KUW	PD	CD	Tot
	DA	SD	ED	LCT	LSL	R	W	NLC	C	SSM				
Pupil A	4	5	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	22
Pupil B	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
Pupil C	5	6	5	4	3	4	1	7	3	2	4	3	4	51
Pupil D	1	5	3	1	1	3	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	21
Pupil E	4	5	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	4	1	25
Pupil F	3	3	4	4	4	5	3	1	2	4	2	3	2	41

KEY: PSED; Personal Social & Emotional Development (**DA**; Dispositions & Attitudes, **SD**; Social Development, **ED**; Emotional Development)
CLL; Communication Language & Literacy (**LCT**; Language for Communication & Thinking, **LSL**; Linking Sounds & Letters, **R**; Reading, **W**; Writing)
PSRN; Problem Solving Reasoning & Numeracy (**NLC**; Numbers as Labels & for Counting, **C**; Calculating, **SSM**; Shape, Space & Measures)
KUW (Knowledge & Understanding of the World) **PD** (Physical Development) **CD** (Creative Development)

National Curriculum Results for School Year 2009/2010

		Target (no. of children at level)						
Total Children: 6		*P1/3	P4/5	P6/8	L1	L2	L3	Total
English 2012								
S&L Listening		2	2	0	2	0	0	6
S&L Speaking		1	3	1	1	0	0	6
Reading		3	1	0	2	0	0	6
Writing		2	2	1	1	0	0	6
Mathematics 2012								
Using & Applying		2	1	1	2	0	0	6
Number		1	1	1	3	0	0	6
Shape, Space & Measure		2	0	2	2	0	0	6
Science 2012								
		1	2	1	2	0	0	6

*P levels – working towards Level 1

Key Stage 1

There were no children eligible for assessment in Year 2 so no Key Stage 1 assessments were recorded other than teacher assessments. One child who attends mainstream school for the majority of the week was not assessed as this was postponed until May 2011. This decision was made by the mainstream school.

Future Target for Key Stage 1

Assessment for year 2011/2012

The target is based on EYFS assessment supported by data from PIVATs and Durham assessments for the six pupils who took part in EYFS in 2009/2010.

(It is anticipated that three of these 6 pupils will have moved to full-time placements or changed placements by 2012.)

		Target (no. of children at level)						
Total Children: 6		*P1/3	P4/5	P6/8	L1	L2	L3	Total
English 2012								
S&L Listening		0	0	1	0	1	0	2
S&L Speaking		0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Reading		0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Writing		0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Mathematics 2012								
Using & Applying		0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Number		0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Shape, Space & Measure		0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Science 2012								
		0	0	1	0	1	0	2

*P levels – working towards Level 1

Key Stage 2

There were three pupils in Year 6 for Year 2009/2010. The target was to achieve mainly level 1 and 2 overall with one scoring P8 for English.

This target was fully met in maths and science. In English the target was partially met with all pupils achieving Level 1 or 2 in speaking and listening.

Future Target for Key Stage 2

Assessment for Year 2011/2012

There were two Year 4 pupils in 2009/10 targets are based on assessments in July 2010.

	P8	1	2	3
English	2	-	1	-
Speaking & listening	-	2	1	-
Reading	2	-	1	-
Writing	2	1	-	-
Mathematics	-	2	1	-
Science	-	2	1	-

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

- Individual IEPs linked to statement of special educational needs and annual review, with a focus on personalised learning, individual needs and life skills development.
- Formative and summative assessment including; Pre-entry assessment, Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum profiles, assessment for learning Key Stage 1 and 2 assessment, annual assessment of National Curriculum and P Scale levels, annual school report, annual review report.
- Annual monitoring of pupil progress using PIVATS data analysis and Durham data analysis.
- Moderation of individual pupil assessment, including links with mainstream schools.
- Regular meetings between staff to ensure children's needs are met.
- Visits from Educational Psychologist and LA Advisory Teachers.

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

- Pupils wanted to access outdoor grounds more effectively and so we have developed the outdoor area for leisure and curriculum based activities.
- Pupils enjoy using play station activities so these are available during the lunch time period.
- Pupils have enjoyed the interactive displays in the corridors and we are continuing to develop an interesting indoor environment.
- Pupils have the choice of school meals or bringing packed lunches.
- There is a school council through which pupils have an opportunity to contribute towards decisions made.

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

- School nurse on duty at all times.
- Good levels of staffing.
- Pupils are encouraged to let staff know if they have any problems.
- Regular clinics held at school: paediatric, orthopaedic, orthoptic, audiology and wheelchair clinics.
- Children's diets monitored.
- Effective induction of new staff.
- Provision of healthy snacks at break times.
- Good standard of moving and handling, including regular updates and training.
- Comprehensive health and safety policy with regular premises checks.
- Closed circuit security cameras outside the building.
- Good security procedures - registration of visitors, car parking permits.
- Regular fire drills.
- High levels of investment in buildings and equipment and regular maintenance.
- Safeguarding policies in place and a high level of staff awareness.
- Liaison with mainstream schools regarding issues such as attainment, moderation and attendance.

8) How do our absence rates compare with other schools?

- Total number of pupils of compulsory school age on roll for at least one session - 17.
- Percentage of pupil sessions (half days) missed through authorised absence - 5.1% and through unauthorised absence - 0.1 %.

These figures are slightly higher than those for the previous year (3.5% authorised and 0.0 unauthorised). This reflects the increased medical needs of pupils. However, the figures compare favourably with those given by DCSF for special schools i.e. 8.58% authorised absence and 2.14% unauthorised absence. (National Statistics published March 2010).

9) What activities are available to pupils?

- Broad and balanced curriculum.
- Music therapy sessions for individual children and small groups.
- Outdoor nature trail and classroom including tracker mobility device.
- ICT – children individually assessed and given full access to ICT with fully accessible Learning Resource Centre.
- Swimming / hydrotherapy.
- P.E. and Swimming badges/certificates (as appropriate).
- Holiday wheelchair workshops.
- Range of educational visits off-site e.g. Churchtown Farm Residential, St George V Inclusive Playpark, Odeon Cinema, Donkey Sanctuary
- Links with Whizz-Kidz Charity and other special schools, ie Ellen Tinkham School

10) How are we working with parents and the community?

- Regular parents' activity groups within school – Vranh Chats, parents' signing and moving and handling courses and Therapy Open Weeks.
- Regular consultation with parents – individual parents' meetings, ILP consultation, annual and interim review meetings.
- Two parent representatives on the Governors.
- Wheelchair workshops during holidays.
- Therapy sessions provided during holidays.
- Fund raising activities for charities by the children including Living Paintings and Pakistan Flood Appeal
- Christmas Fayre.
- Student placements from local colleges and universities.
- Links on a Soundbeam project with South Dartmoor Community College.
- Support from local businesses and associations e.g. Moto Services, Rotary Club Devon, Wooden Spoon.
- Parents and families invited to school events e.g. school play, Easter Bonnet parade, Achievement Awards assembly, Harvest Festival.

11) What do our pupils do after leaving this school?

Most of the pupils continue their placements in their mainstream partner schools. Some pupils go on to secondary mainstream or special schools depending on what is the most appropriate provision for the child's individual needs.

12) What have we done in response to Ofsted?

Extracts from Ofsted report in May 2009: Green print is additional for 2010.

'Vranh House School provides an outstanding quality of education.'

'Teachers, therapists and support assistants form a very strong team and create a very strong team and create an extremely caring environment where pupils are encouraged to try their best.'

'Pupils make outstanding progress and their personal development is outstanding.'

'Excellent Early Years Foundation Stage provision'.

What the school could do to improve further?

- Ensure that the timetable for pupils on part-time placements includes sufficient balance between subjects.
 - *New school/school/home diaries have been established, timetables and IEPs are shared. The inclusion service maintains regular liaison between both schools. [Paying particular attention to writing skills development whilst maintaining reading, and numeracy.](#)*
- Make pupils' targets more precise to enable small steps in learning to be recorded.
 - *Training in writing SMART targets, close liaison between education, therapy and medical staff, sharing targets with pupils.*
 - [Provision mapping of staffing levels linked to individual pupil targets for curriculum and independent living skills acquisition](#)*
- Make better use of the outdoor space to promote learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
 - *Improve provision for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties by staff and pupils undergoing Soundabout training and implementing a sensory curriculum at regular intervals as appropriate.*
 - [Implement new policy regarding children with exceptional additional medical needs, necessitating periods of time absent from school to ensure links are maintained and children are supported educationally, socially and physically. To include regular liaison with parents/carers and a personal education plan.](#)*

Beverley Simcox - School Secretary - Joined 1988

Yet another year has flown by and during that time we have seen some changes to the staff. After many years service Maureen Boon retired as Headteacher in July 2010 however, we are very pleased to have retained Maureen's services as our Educational Consultant. Experienced teaching assistants Heather Salter and Carol Eddings also left at the end of the summer term and although we were sad to see them go we wish them well in their new endeavours. Jane Parsons and Michelle Woodgates have settled in extremely well as the new Headteacher and Class Teacher respectively. Like a number of our staff Michelle had in the past been a volunteer at the school and it is a tribute to all the staff and children who make it such a worthwhile place to work that many of our volunteers go on to take up employment with us.



Three children left the school at the end of the summer term to move on to secondary education it has been great getting to know them all and to see the children progress throughout their time in the school and to subsequently hear news of how they are getting on after Vranth House. Some recent wonderful news was the recent marriage of past pupil, Aaron Tailford - we wish Aaron and his new wife, Kelly, our very best wishes for the future.

Once again staff and the Family Network combined to organise another successful Christmas Fair in December 2010 which thankfully was organised for a date pre the disruptive snow. Thank you to all the organisers and helpers for making it a very successful and enjoyable event at which it was lovely to see so many children and their extended families.

Finally a warm welcome to all the new children, their families and staff members who have joined the school during the year – I am enjoying getting to know you all.

Sue Phillips - Finance Officer - Joined 1992

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



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

Tracey Ward - Receptionist/Secretary - Joined April 2005



Working on Reception 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.

Since I started at Vranth I have taken on many extra duties and my workload has increased immensely during this time. One of the main increases has been the typing of reports for the Therapy Team on children who come in as outpatients for 'Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Assessments'. I find these very interesting and it is pleasing to see the progress each child makes between reviews.

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



Connor and Brody use the computer together



Millie and Ben experiencing the Learning Resource Centre



Millie at the Inclusive Park



Dean and Connor using the laptops

Having spent some time volunteering at Vbranch House, I am now really excited to be teaching here. The children and the support staff in Class 1 are very friendly and have helped me to settle in quickly. I have been teaching in the Early Years in mainstream school for three years and I am pleased to be able to use my skills and experiences to deliver the Early

Years Foundation Stage Curriculum to the children in Class 1. The children here are so happy and determined to succeed that they make my job very rewarding and enjoyable. I am looking forward to all future challenges the children and Vbranch House may offer!



Michelle Woodgates
Teacher ~ Class 1
Joined 2010



Poppy learns her words

Helen House - Teaching & Lunch-time Assistant - Joined 2004

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



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

Tammy Brown - Teaching & Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2008

I have been a staff member at Vbranch House since 2008 and started as a lunch-time assistant. I now work alongside Michelle and Sandra in Class 2 and job share a teaching assistant role with Helen.



I am enjoying my new role within the school and working with the new and old children in Class 1 is very rewarding.

**Sandra Selley
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2007**

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



Alex at Hallowe'en



Leah has fun with play dough



Dee Down
Teacher ~ Class 2
Joined 2002

I have been working at Vranh House since 2002. Up until July 2010 I worked as the nursery teacher in class 1 working with children during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Previous to that I worked in a mainstream playgroup and I have also had 10 years experience of working for the NHS in a care role. I now work as a teacher in class 2 and I am enjoying my new challenge of working with an older age group and delivering a different curriculum to that of the early years. I thoroughly enjoy working at Vranh House and being amongst a great multi-disciplinary team. Every day is different here at Vranh House and seeing the bright and cheery faces of our pupils and their determination to succeed is not only an inspiration to me but to all who visit our school.



Debbie Prout
Teaching Assistant - Joined 1991

Although I have worked at Vranh 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.

Ronnie Parsons
Teaching Assistant - Joined 1995

Since I joined Vranh 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.



*Saffron enjoys the King George V
Inclusive Play Park, Countess Wear*



Max rides at the Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth



Chloe Bond
Teacher - Class 3
Joined 2011

Prior to joining Vbranch House as the Class 3 teacher I had been teaching supply at mainstream schools in and around Exeter and also had experience working with children in special school settings. I have a strong interest in PE and sport and look forward to getting to know all the children and staff.



Julie Lobb
Teaching Assistant - Joined 2005

I started at Vbranch House School in 2005 as a lunchtime assistant. I have worked in all three classes, swimming and being in the crèche. In September 2010 I commenced in class 3 as a teaching assistant which I am really enjoying, everyday is a new experience and I have learnt so much already.



Di Brooking
Teaching Assistant - Joined 1982

I decided to retire from work at Vbranch House in July 2008 but be available as a voluntary swimming helper and as a relief if required. Since then I have covered for a member of staff on a six month sabbatical and latterly returned to work permanently for one day a week in class 3. I am also doing a number of hours during the week as an extra member of staff in the various classes. No two days are the same but it keeps me on my toes. 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 enjoyed my brief spell of retirement but have been made very welcome back by the staff and children and I will continue to help Vbranch in all capacities whenever I can.



Di and Millie happy on Hallowe'en

Carol Crabtree - Teaching Assistant - Joined 1985

I have worked at Vbranch House for 25 years and have been part of its steady evolution from a good school to a fantastic one. This development has not always been easy – change often brings feelings of insecurity and confusion – but throughout this long period of growth and maturation, one constant has remained – the children. They have provided the motivation for all our achievements as a school, and have given me personally a huge amount of joy. I would not wish to be anywhere else.



*Carol Crabtree Teaching Assistant Joined 1985
receives a bouquet to celebrate 25 years service.*

Head of Therapy's Report



*Ginny Humphreys
Head of Therapy
Joined 1987*

As the Head of Therapy for Vranth House combined with being NHS Devon's Head of Profession for Children's Physiotherapy my year is bound to be busy. Some of the business has been self-imposed with the decision to undertake a Professional Doctorate in Physiotherapy with the University of Brighton. This concluded in October 2010 with a doctoral award for work entitled "Posture and Sleep in Children with Cerebral Palsy".

My work divides quite neatly into four levels of activity. At a strategic level I contribute to the planning and monitoring of children's physiotherapy services across Eastern and Northern localities of Devon. I attend NHS Devon's Children's Professional Council meetings and I deliver a quarterly report of activity and quality issues to the senior managers of Integrated Children's Services.

At a managerial level I maintain smooth running of the teams based at Vranth House, Ellen Tinkham School and in North Devon at Barnstaple Health Centre. This year has continued to be busy for all the teams. Maternity leave has reduced the overall number of clinical hours available in the Vranth and Ellen Tinkham Teams and remaining therapists have worked hard to cover the gaps seamlessly. At the same time we have increased the OT establishment at Vranth taking on Anna Findlay who is providing individual and group work into the school concentrating on dressing, eating and fine motor skills. She also has an outpatient caseload. The therapy staff team at Ellen Tinkham School have continued to be supported by Sarah Stone, in the absence of Kate Moss due to extended maternity leave, and the whole team are performing extremely well. In North Devon there have been changes with the resignation of two long-serving members of the team, Anna to go overseas with her family and Fiona to concentrate on her young family and other work commitments. We wish them well.

At a clinical level I work alongside my colleagues holding my own caseload. The number of referrals is continuing to gradually increase and all the therapists are trying to work 'smarter' and constantly more efficiently and effectively to prevent waiting times from increasing. Two new developments from last year are continuing to go well with Sally Bunney from the North Devon team providing an in-reach service to North Devon District Hospital's neonatal unit and in Exeter with the contract to provide physiotherapy to the Royal Academy for Deaf Education. However, another initiative reported last year, the Stepping Project to include co-ordination difficulties,



Ben and Sam ready for wheelchair football

has not yet been agreed by service managers within Integrated Children's Services, and has not developed further so far.

The fourth level of activity in my post is research. This last year I have continued to be a member of the Cerebra Research Unit's Advisory Group and have been involved with various bids for research funding. One such bid was successful; a precursor to a possible large randomised controlled trial on the quality of sleep in sleep systems. Rob Shaw in North Devon and I are also currently involved in an interesting study being conducted by Pauline Christmas, a consultant physiotherapist in Birmingham, with young children with hemiplegia.

Thank you to the therapists employed by Vranth House but working across the county. They are a good team and work hard to provide a first class service for families.



Poppy at the Christmas Fête

Physiotherapy

Kathryn Esau - Physiotherapist - Joined 1990

I continue to enjoy my role supporting children with a variety of physical difficulties who attend mainstream schools full-time. This involves assessing and reviewing the children's physical needs, (including specialist equipment and exercise programmes) and offering advice to staff and carers to enable the children to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of school, home and community life. I see the children either at Vranth House, their schools or homes.

I also have a mentoring role to the Physiotherapists working with Vranth House School pupils.

I feel very privileged to have such a varied and stimulating job, working with such lovely children, their carers and such a great team.



Lucy Wills - Physiotherapist - Joined November 2009



I provide physiotherapy to all of the children in Class One and some of the children in Class Three. I also have a few outpatients. My role consists of assessing and treating the children, assessing, ordering and adjusting equipment, reviewing their physiotherapy and hydrotherapy programmes, setting physiotherapy goals and contributing to their IEPs and Annual Reviews. I visit the children at home and in their mainstream schools to advise their parents and teaching staff. I am also part of the multidisciplinary assessment team for prospective pupils. I thoroughly enjoy working with my colleagues, the children and their families. The children work so hard and are so pleased with every achievement they make, whether large or small.



Ben abseils at Churchtown Farm Outdoor Adventure Centre

Maria Margato - Physiotherapist - Joined 2009

My name is Maria Margato and I was born in Portugal. I graduated in 2005/2006 and since then I have been working as a physiotherapist. I moved to the UK in June 2007 looking for new experiences. I started to work for Vranth House in November 2009 and I love it!! I am the physiotherapist for class 2 and for some children in class 3; I have some out-patients as well. For me, physiotherapy is helping/supporting the children to achieve the maximum function possible with fun.



Di Staves - Therapy Assistant - Joined 1987

I started off as a lunchtime assistant and went on to become a physio. assistant. My work involves swimming with the school children and physio. groups. My work also involves getting rooms ready for groups consisting of young outpatients who come to help develop their skills in particular areas such as fine motor groups (using the hand) and gross motor groups (using the whole body). My work is very enjoyable and rewarding.



Jackie Rowe - Therapy Assistant - Joined 1989

As a Therapy Assistant you get to meet all the children in different aspects of the school day. Helping with physiotherapy, power mobility and swimming (just three things from a long list). I also help in groups attended by mainstream children, to help with the improvement of fine and gross motor skills. Many things have changed over the years but the children still make me feel it's an enjoyable and rewarding job to do.

Louisa Hetherington - Physiotherapist - Joined 2004

Prior to heading off on Maternity leave in September 2010 (to have my boisterous boy number two), I spent a year working part time at the Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education and at St Luke's Science and Sports College. This involved working with young people with a variety of conditions and the teenagers in particular taught me a lot about the art of keeping their Physiotherapy sessions motivating! The therapy staff at Vranth are a friendly, committed and hard working team and I look forward to being back amongst friends in the autumn.



Karen Sparks - Clinical Administrator For The Therapy Team - Joined 2002

Days and weeks pass in a flash, therapists whizz in and out of the office faster than the speed of light (or so it seems). In between organising consultant paediatrician's clinics and booking orthotics clinics, liaising with colleagues in Health and Education, and with parents of our pupils and of more than 600 children on the therapy department's caseload, I try to fit in offering some support to our fantastic team of therapists.

When I tell people I work at Vbranch, sometimes they say, 'oh, it must be really sad working there, all those poor little children in wheelchairs' – but I can honestly say I have never worked in a happier, more positive environment, where every child's tiniest achievement is celebrated by all of us.

I am proud to be part of such a great team, united in our respect and genuine caring for each child who comes to us, either as a pupil or for therapy treatment. We continue to do all we can to try to enrich the lives of the children, each to the best of our ability, just as they do for us.



Steven Rowe - Clerical Assistant - Physiotherapy Department - Joined 2000

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

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

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

The Ellen Tinkham Team

Kate Moss – Physiotherapist

Claire Harradine - Technical Instructor

Helen Beamish – Assistant

Carly Hutchings - Assistant

We work as part of the wider team of Vbranch House School and Centre from our base at Ellen Tinkham School.

We offer rebound therapy, hydrotherapy, group work or individual programmes depending on their therapeutic needs. We also take one group of children to Exeter Gymnastics Club for a gross motor and sensory processing session.



News from North Devon

Vbranch House School & Centre provides the only children's physiotherapy service in North Devon. This is a community based service, commissioned on behalf of North Devon by Exeter Primary Care Trust, and is based at Barnstaple Health Centre.

A number of physiotherapists make up the team aided by the invaluable help of an experienced Technical Instructor, Anne Barrett and Clerical Administrator, Val Haydon.

2011 brings changes to the team. Physiotherapist, Anna Veale, left the team in December 2010, to start Voluntary Work Overseas with her husband and three children. She has been part of our team for 10 years and will be missed by colleagues, children and families.



*Kelly Leonard
Physiotherapist
Joined 2011*

Kelly Leonard (*left*), experienced Children's Physiotherapist started with us in January this year. Kelly originally came to us as a college student interested in Physiotherapy as a career. She went on to train at the University of the West of England, in Bristol, coming to study with us as an undergraduate. On graduating, Kelly worked at Vbranch House School for a year before moving to North Wales with her family. There she furthered her experience of working with children.

With Anna leaving, this gave Kelly an opportunity to return to North Devon, which she had always hoped to do. We welcome her back!

After 36 years of continuous service to Children and families in North Devon, Technical Assistant, Anne Barrett will be retiring at the end of March. Her dedication, compassion and companionship will be greatly missed by all she knew.

Val Haydon will also be leaving us after 12 years. Again she will be greatly missed, not just for her excellent skills keeping our office and administration in order, but as a loyal colleague and companion.

Anne and Val's posts have been combined and Michelle Robinson (*right*) has now commenced with us in that combined role. We wish Anne and Val well in their new beginnings and hope it will give them more time to enjoy life in other ways.



(From left) Fiona Eckford, Anna Veale, Rob Shaw, Anne Barrett, Val Haydon, Charlotte Grigg, Sarah Stone, Sally Bunney



*Michelle Robinson
Clinical Administrator
Joined 2011*

Orthotics

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

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

Muscle and bone grow at different rates and the tendons can sometimes get very tight. When there's spasticity (stiffness) in the muscle it can pull the joints into awkward positions and reduce the amount of motion. We are trying to maintain the length of the tendons so that the joints can work properly. Intervention while the child is growing is very important. Outpatients are seen 3 or 4 times a year and the pupils in school more regularly. The children have to be monitored as they grow.



*Jamie Pegg
Orthotist*

The Nurses

Ruth Whitthorn - Nurse - Joined 1983

I have been a nurse at Vbranch House for many years. I am on duty throughout the week. There is always nurse cover here.

We have excellent contact with parents and encourage them to pop in for a chat or to ring us. Between us we have gained several years experience in helping children with disabilities and their families, all of whom have individual and sometimes complex needs.



No two days are ever the same. We never know what may crop up next. Whatever the problem, we are equipped to deal with it. The team here at Vbranch is a tremendous support to us; they have a wealth of knowledge and skills in different areas.

One of our objectives is to keep a good link between home and school and to liaise with other schools and respite units and, of course, other professional bodies in the community plus hospitals.

I am also part of the Munch Bunch Team, our aim is to maximise each child's potential independence with their feeding skills, promote good nutrition and of course good manners within our friendly dining hall.

We have paediatricians from the hospital who have their individual clinics here for Vbranch House pupils and outpatients from the community. Other regular clinics include: Orthopaedic, Audiology assessment and referrals, Orthoptists and optician input, Dental check-ups and treatment. We have also started a gastrostomy review service which is held 3 monthly with the Hospital dietician coming in.

We have begun a continence care review service with support from a community nurse and are also pleased that from January 2010 a Cerebra Sleep Nurse will be coming into school to run a Sleep Clinic. All our clinics are well attended and families and children benefit from advice from our multidisciplinary team.

We now have year 4 Peninsula Medical Students regularly on a Thursday morning. It is a pleasure to see them getting involved with the children in class and they find the experience so useful as part of their learning about children with special needs.

Ellen Prouse - Nurse - Joined 2006

Everyday brings a new challenge at Vbranch House School since starting work here in February 2006.

Vbranch House has a full team approach to endeavour to help our children and their families with their complex needs.

The ongoing support for our families is all part of the daily ethos of Vbranch House School and our daily aim to involve and encourage in the challenge to take our standards higher.



Occupational Therapy

Anna Findlay - Occupational Therapist - Joined September 2010

I joined Vbranch House in 2010; my role is split between working within the school setting and working with out-patient clinic appointments and groups. For me, Occupational Therapy includes building independence and confidence skills using a child centred approach. This involves using meaningful and purposeful activities alongside having as much fun as possible!

I enjoy working with a very supportive team and spending time with the children and their families.



Susan Mitchell - Senior Paediatric Occupational Therapist - Joined 2003

Vbranch continues to provide daily challenges for me as an occupational therapist. We have a high referral rate but have worked really hard to get the waiting times down over the past year - with some success.



I spend most of my time seeing children from mainstream schools most of whom have problems due to poor motor or perceptual skills for a wide variety of reasons. Many also have additional problems relating to sensory, behaviour or emotional needs.

We strive to run a child-centred therapy service - tailoring each therapy programme to the family circumstances. Many children have support at school - we aim to liaise with the TA's where possible, often setting joint school/therapy targets. We also try to encourage the child to take part in everyday activities available in the community, where possible. We aim to keep an 'occupational' focus. Increasingly, there are children coming in from secondary school - experiencing problems with organisation, routines, keeping up with their work. We have had considerable success with many of these children. I often feel that what we do is not rocket science but there does seem to be some value in being an 'objective observer' or a facilitator in improving quality of life.

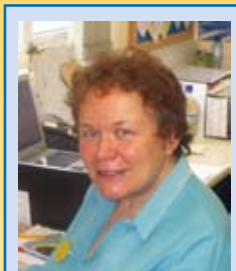
I have had several invitations to speak to other professional groups including post-adoption social workers, parents, teachers, educational psychologists. This always feels like a beneficial use of our time as we can share expertise and make better links.

As always, I am so fortunate to work with such a fabulous, supportive team of therapists, helpers and clerical experts.



Raising the canopy on Sports Day.

Therapy support for children in mainstream schools



*Rosemary Pavitt
Senior Physiotherapist
Joined 1990*

The therapy team see about 650 children from mainstream school to provide advice and support for physical skills. No wonder the grey hairs are multiplying!

My caseload of children and young people have a range of needs including difficulties with balance, co-ordination, locomotor skills or ball skills. They often need a home programme and are given advice as to appropriate physical activities.

It is always pleasing to hear of children who have engaged and improved with Tae Kwon-Do, swimming, trampolining, gymnastics or Teen Gym. Some of these young people also have programmes in school so it has been great to enable and empower school staff in providing relevant programmes and activities.

We continue to have lots of new children referred and I assess at least 3 new children every week. This initial assessment requires about 5 hours work when you count up time reading the background information, assessing with or without my OT colleagues, writing the report and devising a home programme. This is time well spent if the family can go away with a better understanding of the needs of the child and parents and school be confident about using the strategies given. The child or young person is then given a Review appointment a term later if needed to check progress and more appointments later if necessary.

My work continues to be interesting and challenging, but rewarding. We have a great therapy team and are always learning from each other and the children.

School Development Plans

Vranch House has an excellent reputation locally, regionally and nationally and I have been privileged to work with the school in different roles since 2001.

A central reason for this well-earned reputation is the forward thinking vision of the senior management team in supporting the continual improvement of the school in all respects. This is especially important at a time of significant change in the educational climate, as currently the government is committed to developing a new relationship with schools.

At the heart of this relationship is the process of self-evaluation leading to school improvement. Our current initiatives are designed to ensure that the school continues to stay focused and is innovative in meeting these new challenges.



*Bill Richards
Trustee*

The school development plan and continuing professional development of the staff will ensure that we can utilise the huge level of expertise that all our staff possess. We will build on current best practise and individually and collectively move forward with confidence.

The Inclusion Team

Most of the children at Vranch House School now also attend their local mainstream school or Pre-school.

The role of the Inclusion Team, (Viktoria Pavlics, Inclusion Advisory Teacher and Clare Webber, Occupational Therapist) is to set up and support the shared school placements, by liaising with parents and teachers and making sure that adequate facilities and equipment are available, and that various appropriate training is in place for the staff at our partner schools. We visit the children regularly in their mainstream settings to offer ongoing support and advice, and to discuss any issues arising. Vranch House School based Physiotherapists and the Speech and Language Therapist are also involved in this outreach service. Our aim is for each child to be fully included in their local school, whether that is for half a day each week or ultimately full-time.

Clare Webber, Occupational Therapist (Joined 2003)

I have worked at Vranch House since 2003, and I work with all the children and all the staff! My main role is with the Inclusion Team. I am also part of the team which assesses potential new school children, as well as assessing and advising on postural management and development of independence skills in activities of daily living throughout the school.



I am a Moving and Handling trainer for Vranch House and mainstream school staff, and we also regularly offer training to new parents.

I have close links with the Joint Agency Occupational Therapists, and I run the wheelchair clinic here with Exeter Mobility Centre staff twice a term. Vranch House is full of opportunities for children and adults to develop new skills and friendships.

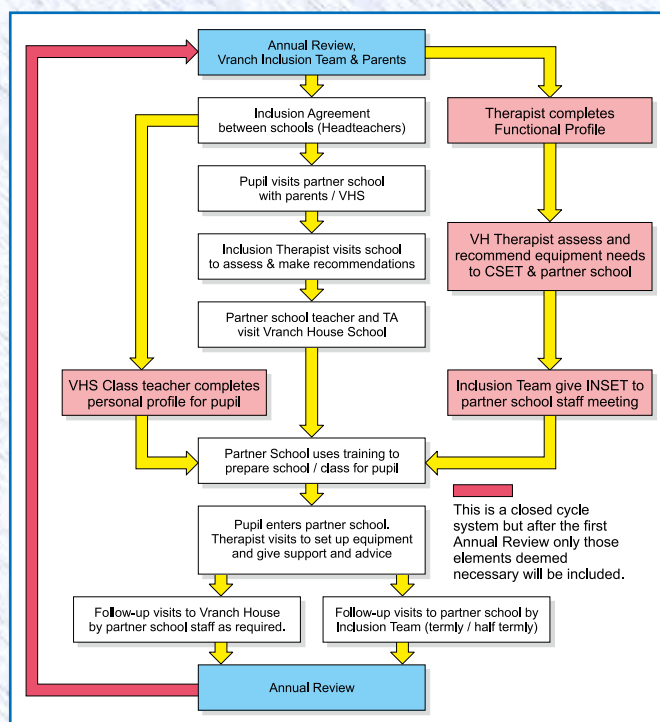
Viktoria Pavlics, Inclusion Advisory Teacher (Joined 2005)



I joined Clare in the Inclusion Team in 2005. I also teach at Vranch House in the absence of the class teachers and take my share in the process of updating the curriculum policies.

I am seconded for one day a week to the Physical Difficulties Team of the Support and Advisory Teacher Service, covering Exeter, Mid and East Devon. I support mainstream settings where pupils with physical difficulties are included full time.

I am currently studying for the Masters in Special Educational Needs at the University of Exeter.



Speech and Language Therapy Report



*Catherine Ward
Speech & Language
Therapist
Joined 2006*

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION NEEDS

It's been another busy year for Speech and Language Therapy, with a few changes throughout the year. I had a short "career break" and headed over to St Lucia to do 6 months voluntary speech therapy in a child development centre. A great experience that meant I escaped the winter and got to explore St Lucia

and some other islands as well as working in a very different setting. Denise (SLT Assistant) went off on maternity leave just as I returned in April. We are really looking forward to having her back for 2 days / week in Dec 2010. Kelly Redding did a great job covering the SLT role while Cat was away and has now returned in her role in the paediatric team with the NHS.

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



*Denise Hutchinson
Speech & Language
Teaching Assistant
Joined 1989*

The 'munch bunch' team (Cat, Clare OT and Nurse Ruth) continue to endeavour to promote independent eating and drinking skills and good communication at lunchtimes.

On the days when I'm not at Vbranch I continue to be busy doing second opinions for NHS colleagues and working part time at another special school in Exeter.

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



More



me / mine



Finish



good



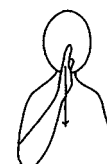
Cold



hot



Happy (2 claps)



sad

Lunchtime Assistants

Dawn Street - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 1999



I have worked at Vbranch House in the kitchen and now in Class 3 as a lunchtime assistant. I really enjoy coming into class and helping the children. It is nice getting to know them all. After lunch we go back to class. I love this time with the children and have learnt how special they all are and what different needs they all have. This is a lovely place to work, staff and children are great and I love coming to work every day.

Georgina Herbert - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2008



I started working at Vbranch House as a lunchtime assistant in September 2008. I help in classes 1 and 2. The children always put a smile on my face as they are always happy.

Abbigale Richards - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2010



I have been a lunchtime assistant since September 2010. Prior to this I was a student at Exeter College studying for a BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development. During this time, I came into Vbranch House as part of my course and stayed on as a Volunteer until I was offered this post. I love working at Vbranch House.

Michala Smith - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2010



I work in Class 1 at lunchtimes. I have also worked in Class 3. I help with swimming sessions on a Wednesday and enjoy my work so very much at Vbranch. The staff are very friendly and working with the children is very rewarding.

Kitchen Staff

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



Sandra Radcliffe and Jean Penn in the Kitchen

Lorraine Chapman - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 1993



I come in each day and help the children with their lunch. We then go back to class to play games, computers and other fun activities. I find working with the children enjoyable and rewarding.

Donna Henderson - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2003



I am a Lunchtime Assistant. My job is to help feed some of the children, also I help them with some personal care and we have a lot of fun playing games.

Chelsea Armstrong - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2010



I first came to Vbranch House to do work experience during my studies. After completing my diploma in childcare, learning and development, I started volunteering as I enjoyed it so much. I now work as a lunchtime assistant and also continue to volunteer on Fridays in Class 2.

Heather McBain - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2010

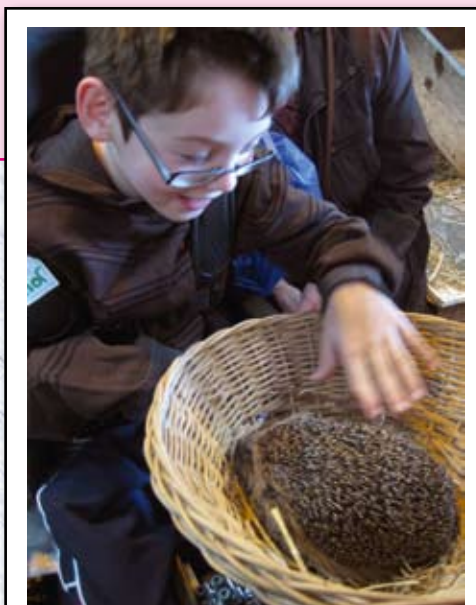


I started at Vbranch House in September 2010 and worked in all the classes for the first term. I am now based in class 3. I have an NVQ level 3 in Health and Social care that I completed whilst working in a residential home for adults. I worked in the residential home for five years. I am happy to be working with children for the first time and look forward to the new challenges ahead.



Sue Downing - Lunchtime Assistant and Volunteer - Joined 2010

Having had a ten month break from working at Vbranch as a Therapy Assistant (September 2005 - December 2009), I returned in September 2010 as a volunteer. On Wednesday mornings I help class 2 in the Hydrotherapy Pool. It's great to be back with the children and working with such dedicated staff. In March 2011 I returned to work 4 lunchtimes a week as a Lunchtime Assistant (as well as continuing with the Wednesday morning swim). I am enjoying getting into my new role and am happy to be back onboard at Vbranch.



Connor and the hedgehog

FAMILY NETWORK

The Family Network aims to provide an informal opportunity for families of school children to get-together for meetings, to offer them a chance to get to know each other and to be able to exchange ideas and share experiences. Sometimes guest speakers are invited. Younger siblings are always welcome.



Various Roles

Adrian Chown - Technician – Joined 1995

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

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

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

Over the years I have obviously become more efficient, as I now only have to work 3 mornings to achieve what used to take me 5 mornings. So at this rate I should be able to retire when I reach 83 years.



Dave Clark - Driver/Handyman - Joined 2005

I am very pleased to be a member of staff at Vbranch House although this is somewhat of a diversification for me, having been involved with sport and leisure management all my life.

My role here is one of school maintenance, driving the children on their school trips and generally helping to assist in the smooth operation of the school within the parameters of my post.

Tom Warren - Mobility Project Manager and Engineer - Joined 2005

Many people will be aware of the black tape on the floor which runs through the school corridors, and some will have seen Vbranch children seated on a the powered platform vehicle which electronically drives along the line of the tape when the child presses a switch. This 'tracking system' allows a child to experience independence and potentially develop mobility skills, and has proven to provide a powerful motivation for learning in many cases.



Essentially my job is to supply these systems to schools, children's centres and individuals in England and Wales, and provide technical support to users (there are currently nearly 100). It is varied work, involving everything from concept and development, mechanical and electronic manufacture, to embedding wires into the floors of newly built schools. Although the work tests me to my mental and physical limits at times, there is no doubt that it is all worth it, if only to see the look on the face of a child experiencing independent motion for the first time!

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to continue this valuable and almost unique work as part of Vbranch House, and am looking forward to taking on its new challenges in the next few years.

*Doug Steer
Caretaker -
Joined 1978*

Phil Gater - Technical Assistant

I have been involved with the Centre since 1972 when I started organising the PA system for the annual fêtes and fayres.

My role now is that of technical assistant doing electric repairs, installations and IT work (including trouble shooting problems with computers, installing software, etc.) Last year I reported that I was working on an energy conservation programme looking at ways of saving electricity and oil throughout the Centre. As a result of this, two projects during this year have been the installation of a new heating system and controls and placing time clocks on electrical equipment. Both projects aimed at energy conservation and cost savings. Another project I have been involved in has been the installation of new televisions in classes 2 and 3.



Phil Gater - Technical Assistant - Involved since 1972



Fly Fishing Fundraisers' Final at Temple Fishery. Individual Winner Graham Culley front row 3rd from left. Team Winners Tony & Richard Lister front row 1st & 2nd from left. Mary Radcliffe front row and husband Keith, behind her, won an Award for raising over £9,500 in the 18 years they've entered.



Jailbreak - Torbay Police Dick Scagell, Jerry Day, Martyn Hodge & Mike Griffiths danced through Europe dressed as Morris Men. The team led by Mike has raised over £36,000 in 11 escapes.



Jailbreak the team from the Barge Inn, Halberton - Lyn Trump, Sue Hutter, Dee Williams, Helen Jepps, Rachael Moore, Tracey Payne & Lin Harmsworth. They escape as Martians on a space rocket. Various team members have raised over £14,500 in 6 escapes.



Jailbreak - Nautibouys from Darthaven Marina, Mike Jackson & Martin Pragnell disguised as Smurfs fled by helicopter for all 4 capitals in the UK.

Marketing Manager's Report



Sue Gould, Marketing Manager Joined Scope 1985, Vbranch House 1995

A growing number of people have contributed to the school's success in raising funds and in raising public awareness of the wonderful work carried out by our highly professional, enthusiastic and dedicated staff. On behalf of the school, I would, therefore, like to say a mighty 'Thank you!' to the following individuals and organisations: -

- Volunteers Julianne & Arthur Phillips, David Robertson, June Gamett, Theresa Phillips and Tina Rabbitts for all the funds they raise at various fairs
- The Management, staff and parents for supporting the variety of fundraising events
- The companies and trusts who respond so generously to our appeals
- The various organisations and institutions that have nominated us as their charity
- The press & radio for their extensive coverage.
- The wonderful children who featured in so many excellent press photographs and their parents for giving permission for publication
- The companies who annually donate £2,500 worth of prizes in our Charity Challenge Fly Fishing Competitions, in particular BVG Airflo
- The fly fishery owners and fishing club chairmen for their enthusiasm and for encouraging anglers to enter these Competitions
- The anglers who raise such considerable sums
- The Governor of Dartmoor Prison for giving us permission to hold the Jailbreak each April - an event that has raised nearly £610,000 since 1984
- The celebrities who come along to give their support on the day and on the way
- The armed forces, Police, Fire & Ambulance Service, hospitals, councils and companies who circulate information to help recruit teams
- The many 'escapees' who take part annually
- The hundreds of companies, organisations and individuals worldwide who help these participants by providing free transport, accommodation and sponsorship
- The Management Committee and the Chairman for their trust and encouragement
- The Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club & Wooden Spoon for their great generosity

Without doubt, Vbranch House is a centre of excellence with a very kind heart and it is a privilege and joy to work here.

**Sue Gould
Marketing Manager**