



Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2018 - 2019



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 2017 - 2018

Board of the Society

Chairman:	Julia Tolman-May
Vice Chairman:	Mrs R Neary
	Mrs M Williams
	Miss P Hale
	Mrs R Pavitt
	Mr C Rendle
	Dr R Tomlinson
	Miss S Williams
	Mr A Griffin
	Col. G Wheeler ⁺⁺
	Ms K Moss ⁺
	Mr I Norton ⁺

⁺Ex Officio Members

⁺⁺Secretary

The persons listed above, less the ex-officio members, were the appointed Trustees and Directors of the Society for the 2018 - 2019 Financial Year

Board of Governors

Chairman:	Julia Tolman-May
Vice Chairman:	Mrs R Neary
Secretary:	Col G Wheeler
	Mr I Norton ⁺
	Ms K Moss ⁺⁺
	Mrs V Lye ^{..}
	Miss S Tutinas ^{...}
	Mrs S Atkinson ^{...}
	Mr A Griffin ^{...}

^{..} Staff Representative

^{...} Parent Governors

⁺Head of Education

⁺⁺Head of Therapies

Management Committee

Chairman:	Mrs J Tolman-May
	Mr I Norton
	Col G Wheeler
	Ms K Moss

Principal Staff

Chief Executive
Colonel G F Wheeler MPhil., CGIA

Head of Education
Mr I Norton BEng(Hons), BPhil, QTVI

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 MRCPC
Consultant Paediatrician

Dr H Brewer MB Ch.B MRCPC PgDip
Consultant Paediatrician

Dr E Thomas MB BS BSc MRCP
Consultant Paediatrician

Orthotist
Louise Mitchell
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

Bupe	- Reception
Rudi	- Nursery
Ruby	- Class 2

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2019 AGM

This is my seventh report to an Annual General Meeting and I am delighted to say I am reporting on a seventh year of unblemished success.

The financial year under audit ran from the 1st of April 2018 to the 31st of March this year. Graeme Wheeler will explain the detail but the charity made a cash surplus of just over £200,000. I should explain that the charity continues to be run in such a way that its planned expenditure is less than its projected income. The positive difference between the two provides us with the means to continue training our staff to the highest level, to pay them at highly competitive rates for their excellent work and to develop the buildings housing our work and to purchase the equipment we need.

In the year since my last report the charity has;

1. Continued to operate the Secondary Education unit housed in the new Honeylands building which Vbranch House owns and operates. Ian Norton will report on this initiative but I can announce with some pride that it is a great success.
2. The summer building program provided new facilities for the new Nursery and Class 2 and for Class 3 and the playroom/nursery. We also re-built the library as an Assessment Room and widened all four of the classroom doors in the Secondary school.
3. We had a fit of enthusiasm and accepted an offer from Ofsted to re-examine the school under a new inspection framework. Ian will tell us more but in essence, although there was no formal report, we ended up after a lot of hard work with the same grade of Outstanding.
4. Our Therapy department continues to provide services to the same number and cohort of children. The great success of the first Innwalk (a kind of complex cross- trainer for children with physical difficulties) led us to purchase two more to enable a wider range of children to access what is becoming a treatment that is different to, but as effective as, hydrotherapy. There are only three schools in the UK with this equipment but we are the only one that has three. To make the best use of these highly effective devices we are about to start work on a new building to house all three.
5. Waiting times average 7.4 weeks across the year (the NHS target is eighteen weeks but this target is mostly not achieved elsewhere). There have been no complaints at all for the 58th year and the Friends & Family continuous survey places Vbranch House firmly in the top of five separate quality judgements.

Finally, I would like on your behalf to express the warmest thanks to our employees. The dedication, hard work, and professionalism of our staff – which now number nearly ninety - are the foundation of this charity's many successes. We remain deeply impressed by their service and grateful for all that they do.

Julia Tolman-May
Chairman



Chairman
Julia Tolman-May

Annual Trustees' Report

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2019

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019.

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

Mrs R Neary

Vice Chairman

Mrs M Williams

Miss P Hale

Mrs R Pavitt

Mr C Rendle

Dr R Tomlinson

Miss S Williams

Mr A Griffin

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

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

Mr I Norton (*ex officio as Head of Education*)

Company Secretary & Chief Executive

Colonel G Wheeler

Board of Governors

Mrs J Tolman-May

Chairman

Mrs R Neary

Vice Chairman

Col G Wheeler

Secretary

Mr I Norton

Head of Education

Mrs K Moss

Head of Therapies

Mrs V Lye

Staff member

Miss S Tutinas

Parent Governor

Mrs S Atkinson

Parent Governor

Mr A Griffin

Governor

Management Committee

Mrs J Tolman-May

Chairman Col G Wheeler

Mrs K Moss

Mr I Norton

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and Aims

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 nineteen at Vranch 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, installs and maintains assisted mobility tracks and robotic vehicles throughout England and Wales.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievement and performance

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" or "good" achieved in 1996, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018.

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. In May 2017 the charity was invited by Devon County Council to extend the age-range of Vranth House School to offer places for secondary-age pupils. A new unit of four classrooms and appropriate facilities was developed in the lower east wing of the Honeylands building and this, together with the prospective curriculum and staffing ratios, was approved by the Department for Education after an Ofsted inspection. The new Secondary school opened in September 2017 just four months after the initial invitation. The school license now provides for thirty-three pupils from the age of two to nineteen. In July 2018 the school was inspected by Ofsted and received an Outstanding grading (the performance of the school was judged to be outstanding in every area of the inspection).

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-nine children on the school roll and just under 2,000 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 and High Five programmes which aim to train school staff to recognise and use intervention techniques for Gross and Fine Motor Developmental Coordination Disorder.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievement and performance

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) and our two Safeguarding Leads are trained to level 6.

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 although maintenance of the installed base remains an ongoing activity. 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 7.8 weeks against a national target of eighteen weeks, all service development targets were met in the year under review and the poll of out-patient opinion shows that over 96.7% of our referrals place Vranth House in the top category, 3.3% in the next one down and none at all in the lower three categories. Our record of never having received a formal complaint continues.

Within the Financial Year the charity re-built the main physiotherapy area and completed the refurbishment, to a very high standard, of the Class 1 and Nursery facilities.

Financial review

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income for the year ending the 31st of March 2019 of £2,106,554 (£1,817,082 in 2018), an increase of £289,472 largely due to the increased number of school pupils and the introduction of a secondary element. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,639,684 (£1,389,967 in 2018). This increase of £249,717 is the result of the corresponding increase in income in relation to expenditure. The Society has Net Assets amounting to £6,554,036 (£6,345,511 in 2018) - an increase mainly generated by higher capital spend.

The net income and net movement in funds for the year is £205,525 (£50,109 in 2018). Adding back depreciation of £160,253 (a non-monetary expense) to this net income, the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £365,778 (£194,549 last year).

Total income from Charitable activities of £1,952,278 (£1,743,968 in 2018) includes the contract income from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from donations and all other sources is £154,276 (£73,114 in 2018). The capital and revenue costs not charged to our contract partners are in excess of £700,000 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 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.

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.

Reserves & 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.

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 and statutory sectors 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.

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 eleven 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 over 60% 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 capital charges and revenue it waives, principally for the use of capital facilities which the charity owns and the running costs of these facilities; 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.

Plans for future periods

The new Service Led Agreement with Devon County Council and NEW CCG has operated since the 1st of April 2011. The Agreement set a target for charitable

investment in these statutory services of no more than 30% of the total cost. The total contract value has not increased for eleven years despite considerable inflation in both the numbers and complexity of referrals made to the charity so that our contribution is now more than 60%. 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. As a result a new contract with DCC will be negotiated to remove the educational component from the existing combined contract.

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 Consultant 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.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & 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 eighteen 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 rarely 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 four 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.

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 Therapies 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.

Induction and training of new trustees

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.

Related parties

The Society has formal and informal arrangements and relationships with many other statutory and voluntary bodies. Principal amongst these is the twenty-five year Strategic Partnership Agreement with NHS Devon and Devon County Council under which the charity is joint-funded for a proportion 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 Vranck House School, the

review of pupil development and the delivery of clinical therapies at Vranch 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 fully but the Society retains active links with The Exeter Foundation, DreamAway, Whizz Kids, Children in Need, CEDA, A Brighter Tomorrow and a number of County and National grant-making Trusts. A similar network of local groups and individuals continues to assist the Society in raising funds for children at Vranch 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 Children's Specialist Children's Assessment Centre which it hosts in a purpose-built facility on the Vranch House site. It is worth noting that the children at Vranch 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.

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 in order to provide expertise, treatment and enhanced services to children with physical disabilities. It does not charge fees but receives about 40% of the total cost of the services it provides to the North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW CCG) and approximately 80% of the service costs provided to 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.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Devon & Exeter Spastics Society for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources including the income and expenditure of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

In so far as the trustees are aware:

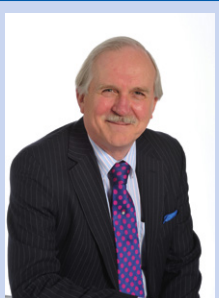
- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Kirk Hills, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on the 13th November 2018 and signed on the board's behalf by:

J Tolman-May
Trustee



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 2019

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2018 – 2019 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 **£289,472** from £1,817,082 to £2,106,554 largely as a consequence of the significant increase in the pupil population in all three schools. Debtors and Pre-Payments increased in proportion to the increased expenditure by £20,190 from £39,195 to £59,385.
- Net Current Assets, one of our most important Performance Indicators, increased by **£249,717** from £1,389,967 to £1,639,684 as a result of increased income and, despite the increase in employed staff, and increase in Expenditure of just £134,056. Total Net Assets increased by **£205,525** from £6,348,511 to £6,554,036.
- With Depreciation of £160,253 carried as a non-monetary expense the charity made an operating surplus of £249,717 but with Depreciation discounted a net cash surplus of £365,778 was generated (£194,549 last year).
- It is interesting to note that the increasing school population has developed income such that for the first time in several decades the difference between what the school costs and the income derived from it is now moving towards a balance.
- The number of pupils in the school has increased and the number of outpatients seen by the clinic has been maintained. The charity continues its program of capital 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 our contracts and to continue to fund service objectives so that all the benchmarks are exceeded (as they were in 2018/19). 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 59% of the costs of the statutory services we provide.

It should be noted that our NHS income has been frozen at 2008 levels so that in 2019/20 we will embark on what will be a twelfth year without any provision for inflation. This inevitably means that the level of contribution this charity makes to statutory services must increase or the high standard of the services we provide to the Public on behalf of the State will suffer. It is, however, highly unlikely that this can continue and work is in hand to redress the imbalance. The Trustees have authorised a £90k investment to continue the programme of buildings and equipment development and maintenance in 2019.

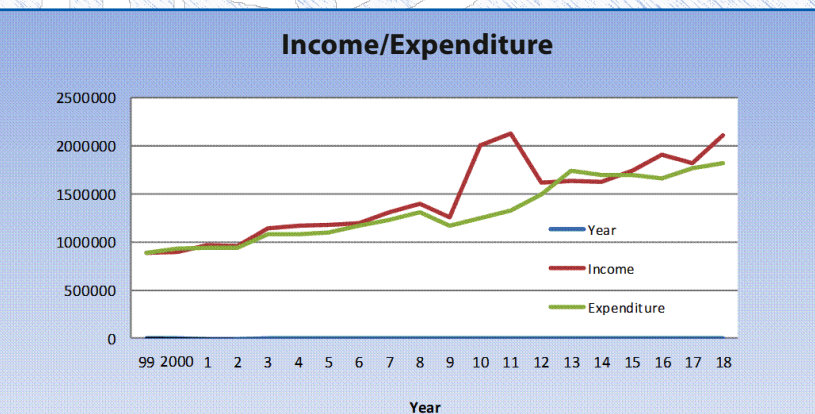
Colonel Graeme Wheeler, Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account	2019	2018	2017
Gross Income	£2,106,554	£1,817,082	£1,908,325
Gross Expenditure	£1,901,029	£1,766,973	£1,666,389
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	£249,717	£50,109	£241,936
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£365,778	£194,549	£379,980

Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2019	2018	2017
Total Funds	0.9%	0.60%	0.44%
Creditors as a Percentage of:			
Current Assets	4%	3.50%	4.00%
As a Percentage of Total Funds			
Profit/Loss for the Year *	5.6%	3.00%	6.00%
Revenue Costs	29%	11.70%	26.45%

*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 2018/19 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.



Ian Norton
Head of Education
Joined 2016

1. What have been the significant changes this year?

- a) Pilot Ofsted Inspection June 2019
- b) Class and Staff changes
- c) Development of the VIEW and EYFS Curriculum within Earwig

1a. Ofsted Inspection 2019

In January 2019, Ofsted invited Vbranch House to host a pilot Inspection in June 2019 to test the then-unpublished 'Education

Inspection Framework (EIF)'. With the new EIF set to replace the 'Common Inspection Framework (CIF)' for all school inspections from September 2019, it was a good opportunity to experience inspection under this new EIF Framework, ahead of our next due Ofsted inspection in 2021. With our success in gaining an unqualified 'Outstanding' across all areas in our June 2018 Ofsted inspection under the CIF, I was confident that what we offer under our Core Offer and the 'Vbranch House Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW)' curriculum would stand-up to scrutiny under the new EIF.

The Inspectors who came to Vbranch House in June 2019 were extremely rigorous and thorough in their application of the EIF in conducting the three-day Pilot Inspection. The new EIF focusses far more on curriculum content and delivery than the former CIF, which was more centred around assessment and outcome measures. The new key judgement areas of the EIF are:

- quality of education
- behaviour & attitudes
- personal development
- leadership & management

The education inspection framework May 2019, No. 190015 9

Under 'quality of education' Ofsted consider the **Intent**, **Implementation** and **Impact** of the curriculum a school chooses to deliver and whether this is meaningful, relevant and appropriate for the pupils of that school.

As per the previous Ofsted inspection, all Teachers, Therapists and Support Staff carried on with their day to day roles as they would have on any other day; there was no contrivance and no highly polished 'set-pieces' were played-out for the benefit of the Inspector. The Inspectors saw Vbranch House pupils and staff at their daily operational 'normal'.

As this was a Pilot Inspection, no written report was produced by the Inspectors; although we were given detailed verbal feedback using the language of the EIF judgement grading criteria. Some key points from the verbal feedback from the Inspectors during this Pilot Inspection under the new EIF were as follows:

- The Headteacher has continued to improve the performance of the School since the previous inspection. Leaders and all staff are ambitious for their pupils.
- The joined-up nature of the School as well with health professionals is exemplary this enables all pupils to benefit from high quality support across the school day.
- All teachers have a strong understanding of the rational and moral imperative of the School's VIEW curriculum. The

curriculum is wholly relevant to meet the complex special educational needs and medical needs of the pupils.

- Leaders and staff work tirelessly to promote pupils personal development to overcome the pupils complex needs. Leaders and staff plan a range of rich activities to develop pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence, independence and ability to make their own personal choices, including in the early years

The VIEW curriculum was devised, developed and is delivered on a daily basis as a needs-driven curriculum delivery and assessment framework for the range of pupils we cater for within our highly specialist provision. It is heartening to know that this approach will be likewise recognised in future Ofsted inspections under the new EIF.

Although no formal judgement grades were given, I mapped the wording used by the Inspectors in the verbal feedback to the new EIF judgement grading criteria and it is my opinion that Vbranch House School would have maintained its 'Outstanding' overall judgement across all key areas were this a full Ofsted inspection.

Once again, I am indebted to the Chief Executive and the Head of Therapies for their unwavering support; my sincere thanks also to all Vbranch House staff who have been key in implementing the curriculum changes I have devised, making the VIEW curriculum an 'Outstanding' success.

1b. Class Changes

Since last annual report we have continued to buck the trend in specialist education and have continued to grow in number of classes and pupils; there have been corresponding changes to teachers and support staff in each of our classes this year. Each class still has a high staff to pupil ratio, with each class team being led by a designated teacher with experience and knowledge of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND). Support staff teams typically comprise a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and at least one 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 Special Watch Teaching Assistant. HLTAs are able to cover individual sessions in cover for the class teachers and will hold at least a Level 3 qualifications. This allocation of support staff continues to ensure the delivery of best practice and high-quality education in all classes.

The current staff allocation for each class is as follows:

Nursery	Reception
Nursery Nurse: Adele Gale HLTA: Ronnie Lye (P/T) TA: Victoria Priddle MTAs: Michelle Bennett, Jasmine Wright	EYFS Practitioner: Chelsea Armstrong HLTA: Sam Woodcock TA: Adrian Jackson MTAs: Samantha Mount, Helen Trout
Number of pupils: 7	Number of pupils: 5

Class 1	Class 2
Teacher: Dee Bradshaw HLTA: Helen House TA: Sandra Selley MTAs: Michala Smith, Adelle Jeffs	Teacher: Chloe Bond HLTA: Debbie Prout TA: Kimberley Morgan MTAs: Kay Dennis, Victoria Kerr
Number of pupils: 5	Number of pupils: 7

Class 3	
Teacher:	Evelyn Gawen
TAs:	Laura Madden, Teresa Sprague
Special Watch TAs:	Kerry White, Ricardo Pacheco
MTAs:	Coleen Kelly, Mel Lynch (P/T), Kerstie Davies (P/T)
Number of pupils: 6	

Class 4	Class 5
Teacher: Zoe Gilbert	
(Acting) HLTA: Lauren Millington	HLTA: Becky Blaker
AAC TA: Cathy Morris	TA: Charlotte Davey
MTA: Rachel Hine	TA: Rhiannon Hegarty
	1:1 TA: Charlotte Watkinson
	MTAs: Elanor Sheriff, Kim Rushton
Number of pupils: 4	Number of pupils: 5

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

1c. Development of the VIEW and EYFS Curriculum within Earwig

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 continued to develop the 'Vbranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW)' Curriculum. The domain 'Experience & Expression' has been expanded with over sixty new objective level statements to include more small-step achievements in the development of hearing, vision, tactile awareness/skill, sensory integration and creativity.

The assessment tools previously used for the national Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) have been the subject of

extensive review between the Head of Education and the EYFS practitioners. There were a number of statements in the EYFS target cache within Earwig that were simply too advanced for many of our pupils to achieve by the end of the EFYS and so end-of-EYFS reports would often need to state a rather defeatist 'working towards Early Learning Goal (ELG)' as an outcome. The Head of Education re-structured the EYFS 'Areas of Learning' target caches and re-developed the assessment tool for these EYFS objectives. This now matches the structure used in assessing progress against the VIEW curriculum.

This significant development in our use of Earwig as our assessment tool will give a far clearer picture of pupil's often small-step progress against the EYFS and will give a more pupil-centred picture of development beyond stating simply 'working towards' the ELGs. This move also ensures pupil assessment between the VIEW curriculum and the EYFS will be more fluid, whilst still tallying with other nationally used assessment criteria so that we can continue to work harmoniously with other settings when transitioning pupils.

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.vbranchhouse.org/about-vbranch-house/downloads/curriculum-policies/> or contact me directly for a hard copy of this policy.

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 revised the School Development plan to reflect the new key judgement headings from the new Ofsted EIF for 2019/20 and the main points of focus for our continual development this academic year are as follows:

Area for development	Action for development
A. Quality of Education	A1 Review 'Education at Vbranch House' under the Core Offer A2 Evaluate validity of numerical data analysis of VIEW curriculum generated by Earwig
B. Behaviour and Attitudes	B1 Promote pupil Mental Health in working practice at Vbranch House
C. Personal Development	C1 Develop multi-agency working around careers and adult living Post 16 and Post 19 C2 Review intimate care policy and protocols
D. Leadership and Management	D1 Develop the leadership roles of all Class Teachers, Superintendent HLTA and Senior Teachers D2 Further develop capacity at a middle management level to include Secondary Provision
E. Early Years Foundation Stage	E1 Develop joint working and practice across the EYFS E2 Earwig Academic to be used to capture EYFS progress

The satisfaction questionnaire for parent and carers was issued once again in February 2019, as per the previous year's surveys, to gauge parent/carers satisfaction with all we deliver here under the Core Offer at Vbranch House School. The results of this survey were published on the school notice board in Reception at Vbranch House and are contrasted with the previous year's results below.

Parent/Carer Satisfaction		2017-18	2018-19	Trend
Number of responses		12	10	↓ 2
Do Parent/Carers responses indicate they are satisfied with their experience of Vbranch House?	Yes	97.9%	100%	↑ 2.1%
	No	0%	0%	No change
	Uncertain	2.1%	0%	↓ 2.1%
Do responses indicate Parents/Carers are satisfied with the pupil experience at Vbranch House?	Yes	97.2%	97.5%	↑ 0.3%
	No	0%	0%	No change
	Uncertain	2.8%	2.5%	↓ 0.3%
Overall, do responses given indicate stakeholder satisfaction with their experience of Vbranch House?	Yes	97.4%	98.1%	↑ 0.7%
	No	0%	0%	No change
	Uncertain	2.6%	1.9%	↓ 0.7%



BEVERLEY SIMCOX
School Secretary
Joined April 1988

Yet again the year seems to have flown by and has seen some changes to the staff and children, saying farewell to some and welcoming others as the school expands particularly in the Nursery and Secondary units.

In July 2018 there were no school leavers, however, one pupil transferred from the primary to the secondary school. Since September 2018 six pupils have joined the school in either the nursery or primary school and a further two in the secondary unit.

Life at V ranch 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.



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

All of the children that started around the same time I did have now left V ranch House to either attend mainstream on a full-time basis or High School. It has been lovely to see them grow and mature over the years and I always look forward to their visits when they come back to V ranch House for Clinic appointments. Every day offers a new challenge and I can honestly say that it is a privilege to work with a team that pull together so well and make everyone that comes to V ranch, for whatever purpose, feel welcome!



SUE PHILLIPS - Finance Officer - Joined 1992

I started work at V ranch 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.

NURSERY



RONNIE LYE
Superintendent Teaching Assistant
Joined 1995

Since I joined V ranch the school has seen many changes. I now work with the Head of Education and Head of Therapies to deliver a bespoke educational package as requested by the Educational Authority. Each child's learning journey can be very different but always wonderful to contribute to. I personally find it very rewarding being part of such a caring and intuitive team.



ADELLE GALE
Nursery Nurse, Joined 2017

I started work at V ranch House in September 2017 as an MTA in the Secondary School Provision. I also helped with hydro sessions. In January 2018, alongside my MTA role, I started working in Class 1 as an extra TA. In September 2018 I became a full time TA in the Nursery. In May 2019 I completed my Nursery Nurse Level 3 qualification and in September 2019 I began my new role as Nursery Nurse in the Nursery. In November 2019 I achieved my NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism.



VICKY PRIDDLE
Teaching Assistant, Joined 2019

I joined V ranch House in September 2019 as a Teaching Assistant in the Nursery. Previously I have worked as a teacher and as an assistant in other specialist education provisions. I feel so lucky to be working at V ranch House; it is a lovely place to be.

RECEPTION



CHELSEA ARMSTRONG *Reception Teacher, Joined 2010*

I started at Vranth House as a meal time assistant in 2010 following a period as a volunteer. After three years of studying I have recently completed my BA Hons in Early Childhood Studies. I am now the reception teacher and am hoping to complete my final year of teacher training here at Vranth House over the next two academic years.



ADRIAN JACKSON

*Teaching Assistant
Joined 2015*

I joined the Vranth House team in September 2015 and am currently a teaching assistant in the nursery. I enjoy supporting the children in their learning.



SAMANTHA WOODCOCK

Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Joined 2016

I started work at Vranth 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, have BSL signing levels 1 and 2 and in 2019 qualified as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant. I have been overwhelmed by the kind and friendly atmosphere at Vranth House and look forward to many years of learning and sharing experiences at the school.

CLASS 1



DEBORAH BRADSHAW BA (Hons), QTS, PGCert *Senior Teacher - EYFS/Class1, Joined 2002*

I started at Vranth 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. I have a qualification in Total Communication Level 1 in signing (January 2009). In October 2019 I completed a course for National Professional Qualification in Middle Leadership (NPQML) and in November 2019 I received a CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism.

I have been fortunate enough to have experience working in all classes within our primary setting and I am now Senior Teacher of the EYFS. As well as overseeing the Nursery and Reception classes within Vranth House, I teach in class 1.

Seeing new pupils arrive in our nursery and watching them gain confidence in new surroundings and develop new skills as they move through the school, continues to motivate me in my role as a teacher for children with physical difficulties. I continue to be inspired by the determination shown by our pupils and truly feel honoured to be working with such an amazing multi-disciplinary team here at Vranth House.



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.



HELEN HOUSE

Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Joined 2004

I started working at Vranth 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.



DENISE HUTCHINSON *Nursery Nurse, Joined 1989*

I started working at Vranth House as a YTS Student and gained a BTEC Nursery Nurse qualification. I have worked in various roles within the school including Teaching Assistant and Speech & Language Therapy Assistant. I currently have a new role as nursery nurse on a Monday and Tuesday in the Pre-School. It is great to work with all the staff and very rewarding helping the new children settle into school life.

CLASS 2

CHLOE MOORE

Teacher - Class 2, Joined 2011

I started working at Vranth House School in February 2011 as the Class 3 teacher. I have been fortunate enough to have experience of working in all three classes within our primary setting.

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.



DEBBIE PROUT

Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Joined 1991

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



KIMBERLEY MORGAN

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2018

I started at Vranth House in September 2018 as an MTA, prior to that I worked at the RD&E Maternity Hospital as an auxiliary nurse. I have four children one of whom has additional needs. In September 2019 I became a TA in Class 2. I love working with all the lovely children at Vranth House and feel very lucky to be part of their day.



Elliot on Innowalk



EVELYN GAWEN

Teacher - Class 3, Joined 2017

I started working at Vbranch House School in September 2017. I am currently teaching Class 3 and I am thoroughly enjoying working with the children.

I have a degree in Psychology and English Literature. I completed my PGCE training as a Primary School Teacher in 2015 where I specialised in working with children in Primary schools with special educational needs.

I have been working as a special needs teacher with children with a range of multi-sensory impairments. In my spare time I enjoy going for walks and being outdoors.



KERRY WHITE

1:1 Special Watch Assistant, Joined 2018

I started to work at Vbranch House in October 2018 as a lunchtime support assistant, I also helped with swimming sessions and other cover where needed. I now work as a 1:1 Special Watch Assistant in Class 3. I have never worked with such friendly staff and wonderful children.

I have a level 3 Diploma for the Children & Young People's Workforce.



TERESA SPRAGUE

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2015

I joined Vbranch House as a lunchtime assistant in September 2015. In October 2017 - October 2018 I had the privilege of working as a special watch 1:1 teaching assistant which was extremely rewarding. In November 2018 I became a full time teaching assistant. I love working at Vbranch as the children are so amazing and inspiring.



LAURA MADDEN

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2016

I started working at Vbranch House in April 2016 as a lunchtime support assistant. I am now a Teaching Assistant. I enjoy working with the staff and children everyday, the atmosphere here is lovely.



RICARDO PACHECO

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2019

I started at Vbranch House in September 2019 as a 1:1 TA. Working with children is my dream job and I feel inspired coming to work every day to work with the children and seeing how amazing they are.



Grace and Isabel peer interaction

CLASS 4

ZOE GILBERT

Teacher - Class 4, Joined 2017

I am a teacher and the Secondary School Coordinator.

I qualified from UNL with my undergraduate degree and then completed my PGCE at Plymouth University in 2006.

My teaching career started in a mainstream Secondary school teaching English but I also taught pupils within the Opening Minds programme which focussed on inclusion for SEN pupils within a mainstream environment. Since then I have taught at a number of SEN schools, starting at Vranth House in 2017. It has been great to be part of an outstanding team working within a curriculum which can be truly individualised to meet the needs of all pupils.

In the Secondary provision we continue to work on the fundamentals of the VIEW curriculum: Communication, Physical Therapies and Engaging with Experiences; as well as looking towards needed life skills for adulthood and integrating into the community. We continue to make important links with local groups, centres and colleges to assist pupils transition from children to young adults.



LAUREN MILLINGTON

Higher Level Teaching Assistant, Joined 2018

I have been at Vranth House since January 2018 in various roles. I am now a HLTA in the secondary provision and enjoy working with the children each day.



CATHY MORRIS

AAC Teaching Assistant, Joined 2019

I started at Vranth House in September 2019 fulfilling a new role of AAC TA. I am enjoying learning new skills and new challenges. My previous roles have been in education and care, mainly supporting adults with sensory impairments. Hopefully my previous experience will prove useful in my new role at Vranth House.



Joshua Physio Session



REBECCA BLAKER

Higher level teaching assistant, Joined 2018

I started working at V ranch house in 2018 as a Teaching assistant. Since then I have progressed to being a HLTA in the new class 5. I have previous experience of working with children with physical difficulties in a mainstream secondary school. I am a key trainer in Manual handling which involves training all staff who currently work at V ranch House. I feel privileged to be part of the V ranch House team and look forward to my future here.



CHARLOTTE DAVEY

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2012

I've been at V ranch since 2012 when I started as a lunchtime assistant. Recently I was lucky enough to become a full-time Teaching Assistant which I am really enjoying. The children make me smile everyday and I feel so lucky to be a part of V ranch House.



RHIANON HEGARTY

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2019

I joined V ranch House in September 2019 as a Teaching Assistant. I find each day very exciting to come and work with wonderful staff and pupils.



CHARLOTTE WATKINSON

Teaching Assistant, Joined 2019

I joined V ranch House in November 2019 as a Teaching Assistant in Class 5. Prior to this I worked for twelve years as a Community Healthcare Assistant caring for children with complex medical needs. I am an NNEB Qualified Nursery Nurse and have a NVQ Level 3 in Clinical Healthcare Support. I am really enjoying my new role and feel incredibly lucky to work alongside all the fantastic staff and children at V ranch House.



Bethany and Leah Chest Physio

Clinical Report



Kate Moss
Head of Therapies
Joined 2000

The Therapy Department at Vranth 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 Vranth House School pupils, via Therapists and Therapy Assistants.
- Daily Outpatient Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy assessments and review appointments.
- Physiotherapy work on the neonatal unit at the RD&E Hospital.
- Delivering Fun Fit and High Five training to staff in mainstream schools throughout Devon.

- Vranth 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 Vranth House and within children's services.

The therapists maintain a high level of continued professional development and through the support of the Charity access a wide range of courses and conferences. This enables us to continue to provide a high level of intervention and a quality service.

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.

Physiotherapy



KATHRYN ESAU - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 1990

I work part-time 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. It continues to be a privilege and pleasure working with the children, their families, support staff and my colleagues.



LUCY WILLS - 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. In October 2018 I was given the opportunity to be the Team Lead in North Devon for three days a week, whilst continuing to work in Exeter two days a week. I work 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 - Children's Specialist Physiotherapist - Joined 2012

I joined the Therapy Team in 2012 following completion of core rotations before specialising in Paediatrics. My current role is split between Vranth House Therapy Team where I cover several clinics and Honeyland's Children's Assessment Centre 0-5 team. Within this role I also recently started working on the Neonatal unit and cover neuro-developmental clinics at the RD&E. This enhances the importance of early intervention and continuation of care. In 2017 I also completed two master modules in Paediatric Physiotherapy which has further enhanced my knowledge in this specialist area. I enjoy how diverse and different my role is and how rewarding it can be.

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

I have been working with the Vrch 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 Vrch House School in January 2011 and having spent some time working in the Vrch 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 Vrch 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 Vrch 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 Vrch 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 Vrch.

**REBECCA STARLING - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2017**

I qualified as a physiotherapist from the University of Liverpool in 1998. Following this I began working at Derriford Hospital in a variety of specialist areas, including the children's wards and neonatal unit. As part of this role I also spent some time working at Dame Hannah Rogers School in Ivybridge. From 2000 to 2002 I worked at Torbay and Newton Abbot hospitals on the surgical, respiratory and neurology wards.

I started at Honeylands Specialist Child Assessment Centre in 2002 working with 0-5 year olds with neuromuscular conditions and developmental difficulties, in the specialist nursery groups and outpatient settings. As part of this role I help to provide the physiotherapy service to the neonatal unit at the RD&E Hospital.

I became a member of the Vrch House team in September 2017 and I am continuing to work within the 0-5 service based in Honeylands at present.

**KATIE BIRD - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2019**

Having graduated from the University of The West of England in July 2019, my position at Vrch House as an out patient physiotherapist is my first post-graduate role. Throughout my studies and in previous work experience/voluntary roles, I have gained experience in working with both children and adults and am now excited to further my knowledge and skills in the specialty of paediatrics.

I am delighted to be working with the team and service users at Vrch House and thoroughly enjoy the variation in my caseload with the outpatients as well as occasionally popping into the school to work with the school pupils.

**KIRSTY SCALES - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2019**

I studied at St Marys University College in Twickenham and completed a BSc Hons degree in Sport Rehabilitation. Shortly after this I went to Northumbria University in Newcastle and completed an MSc degree in Physiotherapy.

On completion of my degree I started working at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead and at Heel and Toe Children's Charity in the North East for children with physical and neurological conditions. In 2018 I moved to Devon and started working at Derriford Hospital where I spent time on the children wards and intensive care units.

My passion for providing physiotherapy for children with physical and neurological conditions has continued to develop throughout my career and I am now very proud to introduce myself as the school physiotherapist at Vrch House. I have a specialist interest in implementing research in to practice in order to provide a high level of care and support for children and families.

Physiotherapy (continued)



BEKKI MILLS - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2018

I qualified as a Physiotherapist from Southampton University in 1999 and began my Physiotherapy Career at Southampton General Hospital. I moved into Paediatrics in 2001, initially covering the acute inpatients and out-patients in Southampton, where I had experience of Neurology, Respiratory and Orthopaedics specialities.

I then moved on to Community Paediatric Physiotherapy in North Hampshire, where I worked in Special schools, Mainstream schools, Early intervention and pre-school service, Neonatal follow up and Gait Clinic. I am Bobath trained and have a wide variety of experience treating children, and families, with neurodevelopmental, respiratory and musculoskeletal conditions.

Now having moved back to lovely Devon with my family I am enjoying being part of the Vranth House team and enjoying seeing children and young people with a wide variety of issues in Honeylands, Vranth House School and as Out-patients.



RACHEL CURTIS - Therapy Admin Assistant - Joined 2018

I recently joined the Vranth House therapy department in an administrative position on a part time basis.

Having worked within mortgages for the last fifteen years, I am very excited to have joined the hard working and enthusiastic team at Vranth house and I am excited about the challenges and opportunities it will bring.



HELEN HICKS Therapy Assistant - Joined 2006

I am currently part-time in school helping with the Innwalk sessions and doing outpatient hydrotherapy on Friday afternoons.



JULIE LOBB - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2005

I joined Vranth 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 were the same.

Following this I became a Therapy & Learning Assistant which meant I worked in the class as per normal but also acted as a go-between the Therapy and Class ensuring the children had the postural management they needed.

In September 2018 I joined the therapy team as a therapy assistant. I do lots of different tasks from assisting in speech and language therapy, hydro, work in the classes, rebound, innwalk, etc. as required. This is a completely different role and I am enjoying this new challenge.



GEMMA BRANDON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2017

I currently work at the Exeter Deaf Academy providing physiotherapy support to students from primary school age up to college-age young adults. I enjoy working as part of a dynamic and multidisciplinary team.



REBECCA WHEELER - Business Support Manager - Joined 2012

I started work in the Vranth House Therapy Department at the beginning of 2012, having had some prior experience of the broad range of services offered by Vranth House as a volunteer.

I became Clinical Administration Team Lead in October 2014, then Practice Manager in 2017 and Business Support Manager in 2018 as my role evolved to encompass more data management and statistical analysis. Interacting daily with the Vranth House School pupils, the Therapy Department outpatients, and the hard working and enthusiastic team of Vranth House staff, makes for an enjoyable and rewarding workplace.



LYDIA KINGDOM - Therapy Admin Assistant - Joined 2016

I started at Vranth 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 Vranth.



GEORGINA HERBERT - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2008

I have been working at Vranth House since 2008. I started as a lunch-time assistant but now I work as a Therapy Assistant covering hydrotherapy and I cover at three special needs schools. I have Level 1 Makaton and completed my First Aid.

Each day provides a new challenge and I really like doing my job and working for Vranth House.

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.

Vranch House (North Devon)

The Vranch House (North Devon) physiotherapy team is based at Barnstaple Health Centre. There are currently three Vranch House physiotherapists permanently based in Barnstaple (Lucy Wills, Rhiannon Powell and Victoria Brunton), and a dedicated administrator (Kathryn McDine); we are planning to employ a fourth physiotherapist this year.

The North Devon team work closely with other professionals including orthotists (who hold clinics at the Health Centre), and with paediatric staff at North Devon District Hospital; our

physiotherapists support the Special Care baby Unit at NDDH, and attend neurodevelopment clinics with the paediatricians. Wheelchair clinics are regularly held within our North Devon department, with physiotherapists working alongside staff from Exeter Mobility Centre to assess children's postural and mobility needs.

We provide physiotherapy for pupils at Pathfield School, with Rhiannon Powell spending part of her week on-site at the school. The outpatient appointments mainly take part at the Health Centre but visits are also made to children at home/school/hospital when necessary due to the child's health needs. We see children with a



range of conditions and needs including neurological, neuromuscular, congenital and developmental conditions.

The North Devon team regularly gets together with the Exeter team for training and professional development, and the two teams work together to provide a cohesive, professional and child-centred physiotherapy service across the North, East and Mid Devon areas.

THE ELLEN TINKHAM AND MILL WATER PHYSIOTHERAPY TEAMS

GILL SCOTT – Physiotherapist

CLAIRE HARRADINE – Technical Instructor

HANNAH CHARLES – Physiotherapy Assistant

CARLY BUDD – Physiotherapy Assistant

JANET ACKFORD – Physiotherapy Assistant

We work as part of the wider team of Vranch House based at Ellen Tinkham School and College and Mill Water School. These are special schools for children aged 3-19 years with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and complex needs.

We provide rebound therapy, hydrotherapy, group work or individual programmes depending on the therapeutic needs of each child. We assess and give advice on specialist equipment needed and review this on a regular basis. We support fortnightly orthotic clinics and termly wheelchair clinics in school, these are run by Exeter Mobility Centre. We liaise closely with families, educational staff and other professionals.



(left to right) Gill Scott, Claire Harradine, Hannah Charles, Carly Budd, Janet Ackford.



Sue Pratt
Music Therapist

Music Therapist

I qualified as a music therapist (University of Bristol) in 1995 following a music degree, PGCE (early years) and several years teaching in mainstream schools. I have worked as a music therapist in a variety of settings for over twenty years including special schools, CAIRB unit, adult and child palliative services and independent family work. I am HCPC registered and a member of the BAMT.

I currently work for two days a week as a member of the Vranch House therapy team. I spend one day working with

the school children and the other with 0-5 years outpatients, funded by Honeylands Children's Charity. I run individual and group music therapy sessions dependent on need. Through music therapy children are able to express their emotions and develop communication and social skills through musical play. Music Therapy can also allow children with limited physical skills to experience the sensation of movement through music and vibration. Music Therapy is an extremely positive therapy for children, parents and staff, as it focuses on what the child can already do, the child taking the lead, and can interpret even the smallest responses through music. Each session brings something new – which is why I love it!

Occupational Therapy



LISA SIMPSON

*Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist
Joined 2018*

I qualified as an Occupational Therapist in November 2001 having studied in Derby. On first qualifying I initially worked in an acute hospital setting, with adult patients. I started working in the field of Paediatric Occupational Therapy when I was offered the job role of Occupational Therapist on the Spinal Disorders Unit at the hospital. Here I began to see paediatric

patients. I then worked as a Children's Occupational Therapist in an Independent Special Needs School before working for the NHS again as a Children's Community Occupational Therapist.

I joined Vranch House School in October 2018 having previously worked at Plymouth Child Development Centre. I work full-time and lead the Occupational Therapy team; between us we cover the outpatient service and Vranch House School. I am also involved in delivering the training of 'High Five' fine motor skills programme to schools across Devon. I am very much enjoying my role at Vranch House.

Specialist Wheelchair Service



KATE HUGGETT - Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined 2019

I originally graduated from the University of Sheffield in 2006, having completed a BSc (Hons) Physics with Medical Physics. I worked in various NHS roles and spent some time living and working abroad.

Having moved down to Devon in 2009, I then spent seven years working for the Met Office. However, I felt that I really wanted to return to working in healthcare, and so I have recently qualified as an Occupational Therapist, having completed the MSc (Pre-Registration) Occupational Therapy course at Plymouth University. During my course I had a particular interest in research, and I was awarded the Catherine Mounter Award for the best Occupational Science dissertation in that year. Alongside the Occupational Therapy training, I spent time working in adult mental health services, which I really enjoyed. But I have always had a real passion for working with children and young people, and so was very pleased to take up the post of outpatients Occupational Therapist at Vranth House. I am really enjoying working with children, young people and their families, and developing my Occupational Therapy skills in such a supportive environment.

Alongside the above I am also 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.



Michelle Weick
Highly Specialist
Speech & Language
Therapist
Joined 2017

Speech and Language Therapy Report

Michelle Weick leads the Speech and Language Therapy service at Vranth House. She is responsible for the speech and language therapy provision for the children who attend **Vranth House School**, and the **NEW Devon Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Intervention Service**,

which supports children who use high tech AAC devices across North, East and West Devon.

A total communication approach and environment is embedded into daily life at Vranth House School. This means that communication methods such as: verbal language, gesture, Makaton signing, symbols and Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA) are used by pupils to communicate, and by staff to enhance pupil's understanding. In addition, the school-wide 'Play Programme' continues to receive speech and language therapy support, in collaboration with physiotherapy and occupational therapy. This programme focuses

on developing key communication and interaction skills. Michelle works closely with other therapy staff, class teachers, support staff and families to ensure each child has access to continuous and consistent communication support.

Should there be urgent concerns regarding the safety of a pupil's swallow at Vranth House School, Michelle is dysphagia qualified, and as such, is available to provide assessments on an internal referral basis. Pupils are still eligible to access the dysphagia service provided by Integrated Children's Services Dysphagia Service, which operates on a referral and triage system.

Individuals who are eligible for the NEW Devon AAC Intervention service receive SLT assessment, support and intervention in relation to high tech AAC use. This can include: guidance in obtaining charitable funding for a device, support to access the NHS AAC Specialist Assessment Service (provided by Bristol Communication Aid Service/ Dame Hannah Rogers Trust), a communication plan to best implement the use of the selected device, and support and guidance to the AAC user, family and support team.

The Nurses

Nurses at Vrch House School aim to support attendance of our pupils. Our service includes;

- Annual updates for staff involved in delivering care and advice and information regarding;
- Infection Control and avoidance of cross contamination,
- Safe medicine storage and administration,
- Epilepsy awareness and rescue medication administration,
- Policy and Protocol Adherence and accurate documentation,
- Recording and understanding observations,
- Gastrostomy care and feeding competencies,
- Blended Feeding,
- Suction technique of natural airways,
- Mouth care,
- Oxygen Administration,
- Continence,
- Health promotion and any other issues!

Nurses undertake regulatory training as part of their professional development and invite feedback from parents and colleagues to include in the Revalidation process.

We are based next to the foyer, opposite reception at the main entrance to school and are well positioned to greet the children on arrival. We provide a friendly point of contact for parents and carers with any concerns or queries regarding the health and wellbeing of their child and welcome parents to drop in at a convenient time

to themselves. We want to reassure parents and children they will always be treated with respect and dignity and listened to.

We are working alongside visiting multi-disciplinary professionals including;

Paediatric Consultants, Orthopaedic Consultant, Dieticians, Community Dentist and Therapists, Epilepsy Nurse Specialist, Community Nurses and Continence Nurse Specialist, Audiologist, Ophthalmologist, not to mention our own team of Physiotherapists, Music Therapist, OT's and Speech and Language Therapist.

We can refer to other agencies as appropriate such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

We welcome year FOUR Medical Students and Nursing students to Vrch House School. This visit provides them with a valuable insight of the children, outside of the hospital setting and a greater understanding of the everyday difficulties and achievements of our amazing children, quite an inspiring and humbling experience.

The nurse's love to see the children enjoying the varied activities and are always happy to accompany the classes on exciting outings!



Marie Brown
Nurse
Joined 2014



Lucy Leyman
Nurse
Joined 2018



Tammy Brown
Nurse Auxiliary
Joined 2008

Lunchtime Staff



MELANIE LYNCH - Lunchtime Support Assistant

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

MICHELLE BENNETT - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018



In September 2018 I joined a friendly, dedicated and supportive team at Vrch House. My role is a Lunchtime Support Assistant and my duties are to assist and support children with their lunch and promote independence. When required I also assist with hydrotherapy sessions. I find both my areas of work extremely rewarding and really enjoy. I pride myself on making the children's day a happy and safe one.



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 Vrch. The staff are very friendly and working with the children is very rewarding.



KERSTIE DAVIES - Lunchtime & Classroom Support Assistant - Joined 2015

I joined Vrch House in 2015 as a lunch-time support assistant and to help in the hydrotherapy sessions. I now also work as a classroom assistant which I enjoy immensely. Working with the children and staff each day is fun and extremely rewarding.



KAY DENNIS - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2016

I started working at Vrch House in September 2016. Having a son with cerebral palsy inspired me to want to work with children with additional needs. I currently work as a lunchtime support assistant/classroom assistant and help with the hydrotherapy sessions. The job is very rewarding and the children are a pleasure to be with.

Lunchtime Staff



ELANOR SHERRIFF - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I have always worked in Health and Social Care, in a wide range of settings. Vrach House is the first time I have worked in a School and I could not predict how much joy the children bring. They are amazing. All the staff are really friendly and it is a pleasure to come to work. Vrach House is a happy place to be.



SAMANTHA MOUNT - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2019

I joined the team at Vrach House in September 2019, as a mealtime assistant. My main role is to assist the children with their lunch, whilst promoting independence. I also help out with hydrotherapy sessions when required which is something I really enjoy. It is nice knowing that I am helping to make a difference in the children's lives. I look forward to coming to work every day and spending time with the children and feel very lucky to be able to do the work I do.



ADELLE JEFFS - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2019

I have always been interested in education and wellbeing, and made this part of my working life before I had my children. I took a break from full-time work to raise my family, which, for me, was a wonderful time.

When I started working at Vrach, I was very excited to join the school, and a little nervous. However, the team here were so welcoming and supportive that my nerves soon faded. Like my colleagues, I can easily say that I feel privileged to work here. Every day I am struck by how amazing the children at Vrach House School are. Every day I feel part of a wonderful team, part of something special. Every day I learn something new.

I could not be happier. I am so glad I went back to school.



RACHEL HINE - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2019

I started working at Vrach House in November 2019 as a lunchtime assistant and everyone has made me feel part of the Vrach House family. I have worked in care for seven years but this is my first time working with children. I never knew how much joy and reward you could feel from a job until I started here. I can't wait to get to work everyday, I love my job and feel privileged to have been given this opportunity.



HELEN TROUT - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2020

At the beginning of February 2020 I joined the team at Vrach House School as a meal time assistant and I would just like to say that everyone there has made me feel very welcome. I am enjoying getting to know the children. It's a fun, warm place to work and I already feel part of the team.



COLEEN KELLY - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2017

I started working at Vrach House in December 2017 as a lunch-time support assistant. The staff and children have made me feel extremely welcome and the staff have all been very supportive and helpful. I feel honoured and privileged to be working with such amazing children and staff.



VICTORIA KERR - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2018

I started work at Vrach House in December 2018 as an MTA; I also take part in hydro sessions with the children each week. I feel privileged and extremely lucky to be involved in the children's lives at Vrach.



JASMINE WRIGHT - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2019

I started working at Vrach House in October 2019 as a lunchtime assistant. I find the job very rewarding and enjoyable. I am grateful to be working with such amazing children and a supportive team.



KIM RUSHTON - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2019

I started working at Vrach House School as a lunch-time assistant from September 2019. Since working at Vrach House I have met the most amazing children ever who make me smile everyday! The staff are really friendly and helpful and it feels like one massive family with such high levels of care and compassion. I really enjoy helping out in hydrotherapy and class support as I love to see all the different activities the children do and how happy it makes them. Innowalk is brilliant and music therapy is just incredible to see. I hope one day to progress onto becoming a teaching assistant and then even a HLTA one day but working here at Vrach House School really is the best feeling ever and I feel so privileged to work with such an amazing team of people.

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



Relief Lunchtime Staff



DI STAVES *Relief Lunchtime Assistant, Joined 1987*

I started work at Vrach 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.



CATHERINE BAYFIELD
Relief Lunchtime Assistant, Joined 2014

I started work at Vrach 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 Vrach and becoming a relief assistant. However, I look forward to coming in and seeing the children again.



DI BROOKING
Relief Assistant, Joined 1982

I decided to retire from work at Vrach 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 the secondary school when they are experienced in school life and all its opportunities. I will continue to help Vrach in all capacities whenever I can.



CAYLA WARD
Relief MTA, Joined 2016

I came to Vrach as a Volunteer in 2014 whilst I was completing my degree in Health and Social Care. I have since qualified as a Nursery Practitioner and work four days a week in this role at a Nursery in Exeter. As I have Fridays off I have stayed on the relief bank at Vrach and help out when needed.

VARIOUS ROLES



SIMON BATSTONE
Groundsman/Technician - Joined 2011

Having spent twenty-eight years at Vrach 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 Vrach 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 Vrach 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 Vrach House.



Doug Steer
Caretaker -
Joined 1978



PHIL GATER - *Technical Assistant*

I have been involved with Vrach 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.)

Marketing Manager's Report



Andrew Barge
Marketing Manager

This year has been another fantastic year for Vbranch 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 2018-19.

- 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
- The Martin family for their continued support
- The Inner Wheel for their continued support
- Ben Neary for raising £12,380
- Original Style Ltd for raising £1,225
- Lucy Gibson for raising £4,800 by cycling across the Pyrenees
- Isla Kelly for raising £540
- The Exeter Angling Association for their continued support
- The Rotary Club of Dawlish for their donation of £1,000
- Loxbeare Church for their continued support
- Wild Things Ltd for their donation of £500
- The Ecclesiastical Charities Trust for their donation of £2000
- Our very own Dee Bradshaw for running the Great West Run and raising £597
- The Clare Milne Trust for their donation of £40,000
- The Crediton Masonic Lodge for their donation of £500
- The Hadley Trust for their donation of £1,000
- Talbot Underwriting for their donation of £2,500

As in the previous financial year, all donations have been put towards our fundraising initiative for the redevelopment of our hydrotherapy pool. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we were able to raise over 50% of the total £500,000 cost of the rebuild

From everyone at Vbranch House, we'd like to say a big thank you to all many generous supporters



Our Marketing Manager receiving a cheque from Phil Vickery, MBE, our patron, Tony Rowe OBE, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Exeter Chiefs and Keiron Northcott, Deputy Chief Executive of the Exeter Chiefs .



We are delighted to once again be one of the designated charities of the Exeter Foundation.



We are very grateful to Thrifty Car Rental for their continued support of Vbranch House in providing us with a constant supply of a rental car which helps us provide services to the children we serve in the community.

Fact Sheet

What is Vranch House?

An Independent Day School in Exeter for children with significant physical difficulties, mostly with cerebral palsy.

A Centre for the treatment of outpatients with *all* forms of physical difficulties.

A provider of various therapies in other schools in Devon.

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

Who owns and runs it?

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

How many children do you help?

We have day places for up to twenty-eight children and treat over 2,000 outpatients each year.

What ages are they?

Pupils are aged from two to eighteen years, outpatients are mostly under seventeen 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 nearly 60% 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 2018 said:

"Vranch House provides a highly effective education for its pupils. The 'Vranch Individual Education and Wellbeing' (VIEW) curriculum is individualised for each pupil to fully meet their needs. The school's curriculum takes account of recently published research and is exceptionally well planned. Leaders monitor teachers' work to check that pupils achieve highly and develop well. The integration of pupils' physical therapy needs with academic learning helps them to make outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning. All staff receive high-quality training. Regardless of their role or position, all staff see themselves as equal members of the Vranch House team. This is a harmonious community, where everyone works hard to ensure that pupils reach their potential in every facet of their lives.'



Ronnie Lye, Superintendant TA received a presentation in January 2020 to mark her twenty-five years of service to Vranch House.



Vranch House

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