



Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2017 - 2018



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: Mr A Griffin
Mrs M Williams
Miss P Hale
Mrs R Pavitt
Mr C Rendle
Dr R Tomlinson
Miss S Williams
Mrs M Wood
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 2017 - 2018 Financial Year

Board of Governors

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

Mr I Norton⁺
Ms K Moss⁺⁺
Mrs V Lye^{..}
Mrs M Wood^{...}
Miss S Tutinas^{...}
Mrs S Atkinson^{...}
Mrs R Neary^{...}

^{..} 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 MRCPCH
Consultant Paediatrician
Dr H Brewer MB Ch.B MRCPCH PgDip
Consultant Paediatrician
Dr E Thomas MB BS BSc MRCP
Consultant Paediatrician

Orthotist
David Blair
Exeter Mobility Centre

Vranch House School and Centre is:
Registered under the Charities Act 1960
Registered number 1002700

A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered Number 2599511

Vranch House School is:
An Independent School approved
under the Education Act 1981

Front cover pictures:
Left to Right

Grace	- Class 3
Isla	- Nursery
Bupe	- Nursery

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2018 AGM

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

The financial year under audit ran from the 1st of April 2017 to the 31st of March this year. Graeme Wheeler will explain the detail but the charity made a cash surplus of nearly £200,000. I should explain that the charity has always been 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 Vranch 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 pre-school class room and Class 1. We also re-built the orthotics workshop and the clinical staff facilities in the therapy department.
3. Ofsted inspected the school at the end of June. We should recall that this was the first inspection of our expanded education service which now operates as a pre-school, a primary and a secondary school. The judgement was not just Outstanding but, and this is very rare indeed, all three educational services were judged outstanding in every area.
4. Our Therapy department continues to provide services to the same number and cohort of children. Despite the fact that some posts have been gapped because our income has not increased at all since 2008, Kate Moss has developed new ways of working which have produced the same outstanding performance as hitherto. Waiting times average 6.8 weeks across the year (the NHS target is 18 weeks). There have been no complaints at all and the Friends & Family continuous survey places Vranch House firmly in the top of five separate quality judgements.

As you might expect results like this are attracting attention. There are some exciting opportunities opening up which could see an expansion of the school and new contract arrangements with Devon County Council. At the same time we anticipate new arrangements with the NHS now its two-year re-procurement of Children's services is nearly complete.

Finally, I would like on your behalf to express the warmest thanks to our employees. The dedication, hard work, and professionalism of our staff form the bedrock 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 2018

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018.

Reference and Administrative Information

Registered Charity Name

The Devon & Exeter Spastics Society

(Working Title): Vranch House

Charity Registration Number: 1002700

Company Registration Number: 02599511

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

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

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

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

Board of the Society

Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman

Mr A J Griffin Vice Chairman

Mrs M Williams

Miss P Hale

Mrs R Pavitt

Mr C Rendle

Dr R Tomlinson

Miss S Williams

Mrs M Wood

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

Mr A J Griffin Vice Chairman

Col G Wheeler Secretary

Mr I Norton Head of Education

Mrs K Moss Head of Therapies

Mrs V Lye Staff member

Mrs M Wood Parent Governor

Miss S Tutinas Parent Governor

Mrs R Neary Parent Governor

Mrs S Atkinson Parent 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" and "good" achieved in 1996, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2015.

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 Vranch House building. In May 2017 the charity was invited by Devon County Council to extend the age-range of Vranch 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.

The high quality of service delivery has been maintained despite significant increases in the number of out patient referrals and in the number of school pupils placed in the school with complex needs. There was an average of twenty-four children on the school roll and over 1,860 children on the clinical list. The uptake on provided services has been very encouraging, with growth in every area of activity and, particularly, the out-reach FunFit programme which aims to train school staff to recognise and use intervention techniques for Gross Motor Developmental Coordination Disorder. This latter initiative has been so successful that the charity has completed the development and roll-out of a Fine Motor programme to complement it.

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. The contribution made by the Mobility Project Manager and our Technical Consultant to many of the other Vranch 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 Vranch House is providing an excellent service. Median waiting times for this year across all services was 6.1 weeks against a national target of 18 weeks, all service development targets were met in the year under review and the poll of out-patient opinion shows that over 96.7% of our referrals place Vranch 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 School Hall and completed the re-development of the Honeylands building to accommodate the new Secondary School unit.

Financial review

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income for the year ending the 31st of March 2018 of £1,817,082 (£1,908,325 in 2017), a decrease of £91,243 largely due to the large sums generated by our campaign to fund the new Hydrotherapy Pool. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,389,967 (£1,259,401 in 2017). This increase of £130,566 is the result of a decrease in capital expenditure after the completion of the new pool. The Society has Net Assets amounting to £6,348,511 (£6,298,402) - an increase mainly generated by the decrease in capital spend.

The net income and net movement in funds for the year is £50,109 (£241,936 in 2017). Adding back depreciation of £144,440 (a non-monetary expense) to this net income, the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £194,549 (£379,980 last year).

Total income from Charitable activities of £1,743,968 (£1,712,830 in 2017) includes the contract income from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from donations and all other sources is £55,191. The capital and revenue costs not charged to our contract partners are in excess of £600,000 which forms a substantial part of our charitable benefit. The strong financial performance of the charity is remarkable considering that the contract sums for the original educational and clinical work has

not changed at all since 2008.

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

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 nine 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 50% 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 Probatity. 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 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 9 years despite considerable inflation in both the numbers and complexity of referrals made to the charity so that our contribution is now more than 50%. We have defined a new Core Offer for the school which has been agreed by Devon County Council. It offers significant value for money for the authority and yet will make the future of the school sustainable at the increased level of service provision required by the cohort of children educated in the school.

The charity continues to establish benchmarks in clinical and educational practice in order to meet its goal of not just meeting but exceeding service delivery standards. Preparations for the new OFSTED regime continue and programmes of research led by our Clinical 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 April 1991, and an independent charity (Registered Number 1002700) registered with the Charity Commission on the 15th May 1991. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Instrument of Management. Any person over the age of 18 can become a member of the charity on payment of an annual fee of £2 (for those not in work) or £5 (for those in employment). There are currently seventy-three members each of whom are liable to the extent of their membership fee in the event of the company being wound up. All members have the right to vote at General Meetings.

Appointment of trustees

The number of Trustees can be set at any General Meeting but has 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 25-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 Vranch 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 50% of the total cost of the services it provides to the North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW CCG) and Devon County Council. Referrals to the service are made by Local Authorities and all referrals are seen for assessment and the majority of assessed referrals are retained for treatment or given a place in the school. The referral process, whether as a therapy outpatient or potential school pupil, is not controlled by the charity but by NEW CCG and Devon County Council. A school placement or therapy intervention might be deemed inappropriate at the assessment stage but only for reasons that are cogent, demonstrable and compliant with benchmarked national practice. The charity is as public a body as its statutory partners and enters into no private arrangements for individual treatment. No member of the public is denied the services provided by the charity provided those services are assessed to be suitable and appropriate for

the individual concerned.

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:

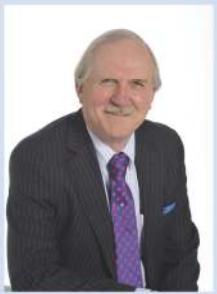
- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

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 2018

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2017-2018 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 decreased by £91,243 from £1,908,325 to £1,817,082 largely because the earlier year benefited from our successful campaign to raise money for the new Hydrotherapy pool. Debtors and Pre-Payments increased by £20,336 from £18,859 to £39,195 simply because of some over-hanging payments but these trends are not significant.
- Net Current Assets, one of our most important Performance Indicators, increased by £130,566 from £1,259,401 to £1,389,967 because our capital outlays were less than the preceding year. Total Net Assets increased by £50,109 from £6,298,402 to £6,348,511.
- Depreciation remains a greater sum than hitherto as a result of the highly commendable development of the asset value of the charity arising from the purchase of the Vranch House site, the construction of the new Specialist Children's Assessment Centre and the re-building of the Hydrotherapy Pool.
- With Depreciation of £144,440 carried as a non-monetary expense the charity made an operating surplus of £50,109 but with Depreciation discounted a net cash surplus of £194,549 was generated (£379,980 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 school cost £640,068 and received £585,351 making a loss of £54,717).
- 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 Vranch 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 Vranch House estate (mostly for rebuilding interior rooms at Vranch House) and for further investment in the Hydrotherapy Pool and the New Honeylands building.

Future Plans

The charity's strategic objective for the next five years is to embody and develop the contract partnership with Devon County Council and the NHS North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group. The immediate objective is to continue to demonstrate performance compliance with the requirements of the joint contract and to

continue to fund service objectives so that all the benchmarks are exceeded (as they were in 2017/18). 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 2018/19 we will embark on what will be a tenth 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 2018.

Colonel Graeme Wheeler, Chief Executive

Profit & Loss Account	2018	2017	2016
Gross Income	£1,817,082	£1,908,325	£1,743,047
Gross Expenditure	£1,766,973	£1,666,389	£1,685,461
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	£50,109	£241,936	£57,586
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£194,549	£379,980	£196,891

Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2018	2017	2016
Total Funds	0.60%	0.44%	1.22%
Creditors as a Percentage of:			
Current Assets	3.50%	4.00%	10.45%
As a Percentage of Total Funds			
Profit/Loss for the Year *	3.00%	6.00%	3.25%
Revenue Costs	11.70%	26.45%	28%

*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 2017/18 is available on request at a cost of £2.00 per copy but may be viewed at no cost but by prior arrangement at Vranch House or on the Charity Commission website at www.charitycommission.gov.uk.



Ian Norton
Head of Education
Joined 2016

provision. Since the last 'Good' overall Inspection report issued in July 2015, the school has changed in a number of significant ways:

- we have grown in pupil numbers and range of provision. We now comprise three distinct areas of provision - Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Primary (5 to 11 years) and Secondary (11 to 18yrs).
- the National Curriculum has been replaced by our bespoke, pupil-centred 'Vranch House Individual Education & Wellbeing (VIEW) curriculum' and ASDAN programmes of work as the mainstay of the education we provide.
- we discontinued the use of Special Educational Needs (SEN) 'P-scales' of assessment for pupils working below National Curriculum levels of attainment. The VIEW curriculum cache within Earwig is now also our assessment criteria.
- the range of needs of the pupil on roll has increased in diversity and complexity since our last inspection.

The Management Team at Vranch House took some considered risks by making these changes, so this most recent inspection was an 'acid-test' of all we have developed and implemented in order to best serve the needs of a growing pupil population and their families. I am doubly delighted therefore to report that the overall judgment of the June 2018 Ofsted Inspection was that the Educational provision at Vranch House is 'Outstanding' in all areas. You can access the full report via the Vranch House website (<http://www.vranchhouse.org/about-vranch-house/reports/>).

The main themes and points of particular note for me, as Head of Education, about this Ofsted Judgement are:

- The Inspector praised the VIEW curriculum and the way this flowed as a common thread through all that she observed at Vranch House. Though this curriculum may have been my idea initially, it has grown and worked so fantastically well due to the hard work and constant review by the multi professional team here at Vranch House.
- The Inspector could not find fault in our use of Earwig Academic in the way it captures evidence of pupil progress and produces assessment data, but also as a valuable communication conduit between staff and parents about the children at Vranch House.
- No matter the role or specialism of the staff the Inspector spoke to, they could all talk about the VIEW curriculum and Earwig with confidence and genuine enthusiasm.
- All parents who spoke to the Inspector were highly

1. What have been the significant changes this year?

- Ofsted Inspection 2018
- Class and Staff changes
- Further development of the VIEW Curriculum
- The introduction of Parent contributions to Earwig 'Timelines'

1a. Ofsted Inspection 2018

June 2018 saw the much-awaited return of Ofsted to Vranch House for a full Inspection of our Education

complementary of the care and education their children received at Vranch House.

During the Inspection Teachers, Therapists and Support Staff all 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 Inspector saw Vranch House pupils and staff at their daily operational 'normal'; that what has become our operational 'norm' has been graded 'Outstanding' is for me the most gratifying point of all.

I am indebted to the Chief Executive and the Head of Therapies for their unwavering support and to all Vranch House staff who have had an active hand in making the changes I have implemented an unqualified, 'Outstanding' success.

1b. Class Changes

As there has once again been a growth in number of classes and pupil numbers, there have been further 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). A class typically comprises 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. HLTA's are able to cover individual sessions in cover for the class teachers and will hold at least a Level 3 qualification. After careful consideration, the Management Team decided to convert the former 'Learning Therapy Assistants' (LTAs) to HLTA's, with all class-based staff now working ever closer with the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy staff allocated to Vranch House. This allocation of support staff still ensures the continued delivery of best practice in classes regarding postural management, positioning, exercise programs and use of specialist equipment used to promote physical development.

Nursery	Class 1
EYFS Practitioners: Chelsea Armstrong (P/T) Denise Hutchinson (P/T) TA: Adrian Jackson TA: Adelle Gale	Teacher: Dee Bradshaw HLTA: Ronnie Lye TA: Sandra Selley, Kerstie Davies (P/T)
MTAs: Michala Smith, Megan Frost, Kerry White, Michelle Bennett	
Number of pupils: 5	Number of pupils: 5

Class 2	Class 3
Teacher: Chloe Bond HLTA: Debbie Prout TA: Laura Madden MTAs: Kay Dennis, Karen Finn, Victoria Kerr	Teacher: Evelyn Gawn HLTA: Helen House TA: Teresa Sprague S/W TA: Lauren Millington MCA: Tammy Brown MTAs: Mel Lynch (P/T), Kirsty Davies (P/T), Elanor Sheriff, Cassie Hemens
Number of pupils: 7	
	Number of pupils: 6

Class 4	
Teacher: Zoe Gilbert	
HLTA: Sam Woodcock	
TA: Charlotte Davey, Rebecca Blaker	
MTAs: Coleen Kelly, Sheryl Hopkin, Kimberley Morgan	
Number of pupils: 6	

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

1c. Development of the VIEW Curriculum

In order to achieve the wide spectrum of aims and aspirations for our pupils at Vranch House, as set out in our 'Curriculum Policy', we have continued to develop the 'Vranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW)' Curriculum. Recent developments include the completion of new gross and fine motor skills programs, from an OT perspective, that have now been added to the Physical Development domain within the VIEW curriculum.

With the current focus on mental health and wellbeing from the DfE and a compulsory requirement for schools to deliver Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) from Sept 2019, I formed a 'Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE)' group this year to determine whether the VIEW curriculum was already covering these areas. After a period of review and many discussions, it was determined by the working group that the present domains and areas of learning already in the VIEW curriculum covered the vast majority of the new PSHE and RSE requirements. The Communication & Cognition and Physical Development domains now have some additional objectives to include PSHE and RSE related topics, with objectives across all domains being clearly highlighted within the Earwig Assessment VIEW framework with the prefix 'PSHE'.

The Assessment scale used with the VIEW curriculum within Earwig has now been further sub-divided, from a three-point scale to a five point scale, and mapped against the two main assessment models used in specialist education settings nationally. This has proven to give a far clearer picture of pupil's often small-step progress and will help enormously when we come to use Earwig to produce data for statistical analysis. This move also ensures Vranch House assessment scales tally 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.vranchhouse.org/about-vranch-house/downloads/curriculum-policies/> or contact me directly for a hard copy of this policy.

1d. The introduction of Parent contributions to Earwig 'Timelines'

Since January 2017 we have been using Earwig Academic for capturing evidence of learning for our pupils against our VIEW curriculum. The Earwig system also provides a secure login for every parent, so that they can see each new record as it is made. Parents and carers have given very positive feedback so far about their experience of accessing their child's timeline in Earwig, not least of all how it makes after-school chats between parent and child much more relevant and helps to encourage shared best practices between home and school.

We have been working with Earwig Academic to enable parents and carers to capture evidence of development and 'wow!' moments at home. I am excited to say that as of February 2019, all parents and carers will be able to upload photographs and videos, with accompanying captions and comments, directly onto their child's Timeline. Once uploaded, class teachers will then have the ability to use the EYFS criteria or our own VIEW curriculum within Earwig assessment module to quantify the captured evidence and include this in the child's ongoing assessment against their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Outcomes.

This development represents a powerful opportunity for parents and carers to contribute observations and comments around their child, in the same format Vranch House staff use. In this way, parents and carers will be adding invaluable insights and evidence of learning to each pupil's Timeline and helping us to build an improved whole-child view of development at school and in the home.

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 am pleased to say that the vast majority of this year's plan is on track for 2018/19 and the main points of focus for our continual development this academic year are as follows:

Area for development	Action for development
A. Effectiveness of Leadership & Management	A1 Improve the admissions process for new pupils across the school A2 Develop capacity at a middle management level
B. Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment	B1 Establish numerical VIEW curriculum baseline for all pupils B2 Earwig Academic to be effectively used to produce statistics on pupil progress against the VIEW Curriculum B3 Establish internal moderation of VIEW assessment and ASDAN programmes B4 Improve links with other Specialist Education providers
C. Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare	C1 Embed 'Normal Magic' into working practice at VH
D. Effectiveness of Early Years Provision	D1 Improve staff contribution to Education Health and Care Plan EHCP composition and review
E. Outcomes for Pupils	E1 Improve admissions to EYFS Provision E2 Earwig Academic to be used to capture EYFS progress

The satisfaction questionnaire for parents will be issued once again in February 2019, as per the previous year's surveys, to gauge parental satisfaction with all we deliver here under the Core Offer at Vranch House School. The results of this survey will be published on the school notice board in Reception at Vranch House and I also hope to publish these on the Vranch House website in the near future.



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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch, for whatever purpose, feel welcome!



SUE PHILLIPS - Finance Officer - Joined 1992

I started work at Vranch 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



CHELSEA ARMSTRONG
Nursery Supervisor
Joined 2010

I started at Vranch House as a mealtime assistant in 2010 following a period as a volunteer. After the completion of my foundation degree in early childhood studies I became the nursery supervisor. I am now studying my BA Hons in Early Childhood Studies.

DENISE HUTCHINSON
Nursery Nurse
Joined 1989



I started working at Vranch 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.



ADELLE GALE
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2017

I started working at Vranch 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 and I am really enjoying my new role.

ADRIAN JACKSON
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2015



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



**Deborah Bradshaw
(Dee)**
Teacher ~ Class 1
Joined 2002

Before starting at Vranch House in October 2002 I had previous experience of working as a Nursing Auxiliary at the Royal, Devon & Exeter Hospital for 10 years and as a Deputy Play Leader in a mainstream playgroup for 4 years.

I came to Vranch House as a qualified Nursery Nurse with a BTEC National Certificate in Childhood Studies (July 1998). Since this time I have gained a Diploma in Child Psychology (July 2003) and a BA (Hons) Degree in Early Childhood Studies (June 2008). I have completed a graduate teaching programme with Dorset and gained qualified teacher status with an outstanding grade in June 2010. Since becoming a qualified teacher I have achieved a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (November 2013). I have had training and experience in Makaton signing and I am an appointed person for paediatric first aid.

I have been very fortunate to have worked in all 3 classes in our primary section and have now found myself back to where I started with the early year's class (class1) and supporting the nursery class as an EYFS Co-ordinator.

I feel privileged to work at Vranch House and be amongst a terrific team of colleagues who are all here to put the needs of our pupils first!

RONNIE LYNE
**Superintendent Teaching
Assistant**
Joined 1995

Since I joined Vranch 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.



HELEN HOUSE
Higher Level Teaching Assistant
Joined 2004

I started working at Vranch 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.



Grace having fun painting



Chloe Bond

Teacher - Class 2

Joined 2011

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



LAURA MADDEN
Teaching Assistant
Joined 2016

I started working at Vranch 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.



Ruby out on her bike



Evelyn Gawen

*Teacher - Class 3
Joined 2017*

I started working at Vranch 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 have recently trained to become a teacher and qualified doing my PGCE Masters training which specialised in working with children in Primary school 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.



TERESA SPRAGUE **Teaching Assistant** **Joined 2015**

I joined Vranch 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 Vranch as the children are so amazing and inspiring.



Faith riding her bike



LAUREN MILLINGTON **1:1 Special Watch Teaching Assistant** **Joined 2016**

I started at Vranch in January 2018 as a lunchtime support assistant. I now work as a 1:1 special watch teaching assistant. I enjoy spending time with the children every day.



Bethany enjoying the sun

CASSANDRA HEMENS **1:1 Special Watch Teaching Assistant** **Joined 2018**

I started working at Vranch House in May 2018 initially as a lunchtime assistant but now working as a 1:1 special watch teaching assistant. I love coming to work and spending time with the children.



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

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





Zoe Gilbert

Teacher - Class 4

Joined 2017

I qualified from UNL with a BA in Philosophy and then from Plymouth University with a PGCE in 2006, training in Secondary English and Citizenship.

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, including Newick House, Woodlands Mead and Mill Water. It was great to be part of the outstanding progress made by the pupils of class 4 last year and we are continuing with great progress this year.



Felix enjoying the sensory trail

SAMANTHA WOODCOCK

**Higher Level Teaching
Assistant**

Joined 2016

I started work at Vranch 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 Vranch House and look forward to many years of learning and sharing experiences at the school.



REBECCA BLAKER

Teaching Assistant

Joined 2018



I started working at Vranch House School in November 2018 as one of the Class 4 Teaching Assistants. I have previously worked in Mainstream supporting Secondary age students with physical difficulties and during this period I spent a lot of time working alongside Vranch House. I am a key trainer in Manual Handling.

I feel very privileged to become a part of the Vranch House Team and look forward to the future at Vranch House.



CHARLOTTE DAVEY

**Teaching Assistant
Joined 2012**

I've been at Vranch 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 Vranch House.



Bupe in his classroom

Clinical Report

The Therapy Department delivers physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy to a large cohort of out-patients in the East, Mid and North Devon areas, as well as to the pupils at Vranch House School.

The Department prides itself on running a quick, responsive and effective service, and on its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the population it serves. We collect and analyse data on our services on a monthly basis to ensure that we can identify changes in needs as soon as possible, and to enable us to constantly evaluate our services to ensure we are continuing to deliver optimum care to our patients. In tandem with collecting clinical and procedural data we also listen to (and seek out) the opinions and requirements of our patients and their families to enable us to provide a patient-led service.

Our therapists also work closely with medical professionals from outside our organisation, having regular discussions about their shared patients and how to provide them with optimum care across the board: for example, orthopaedic surgeons will speak to our physiotherapists about surgery that a child requires, enabling the physiotherapists to design an appropriate rehabilitation programme to be put in place post operation.

The range of work undertaken by the Therapy Department includes:

- Physiotherapy (in both Exeter and North Devon) and occupational therapy (in Exeter) out-patient assessment and review appointments.
- Providing physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy to the Vranch House school pupils on a daily basis.
- Physiotherapy work within the Neonatal unit at the RD&E Hospital.
- The Specialist Wheelchair Service provided by Vranch House is run by one of our occupational therapists, who provides assessments and arranges the provision of appropriate equipment.
- Working alongside orthotists from Exeter Mobility Centre to hold weekly orthotics clinics on site.
- Our physiotherapists and occupational therapists run specialist clinics and group sessions to address the current needs of the patient group; these currently include specialist Foot and Musculoskeletal Clinics, a Developmental Coordination Disorder Group, and a Handwriting Group.
- Continuing to deliver Fun Fit (a gross motor skills programme) training to schools throughout Devon.
- In 2017 we also set up and started to deliver a new fine motor skills training programme- High Five- to primary schools throughout the county.

The Therapy Department continues to have the lowest waiting times within Children's Services, and we aim for the service to remain flexible and responsive to ensure that it continues to best meet the needs of the children referred to us.

HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICE

Vranch House Therapy staff continually update and develop their knowledge and skills through training undertaken both in-house and externally. Regular team meetings, peer and management supervision and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) contribute to forming a service we are proud of. Our Clinical Consultant, Dr Ginny Humphreys, collaborates with academics and other clinicians, and participates in research, feeding back the findings and her knowledge of new developments to the rest of the team.

This year has seen again changes in processes and new innovative ways of working. The staff continue to embrace these changes and work in a truly multidisciplinary way thriving on each other's strengths to provide an excellent service to all the children, young people and families we serve.



Ginny Humphreys
Clinical Director
Joined 1987



Kate Moss
Head of Therapies
Joined 2000

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 Vranch House in 2009. From October 2018 I have been given the opportunity to be the Acting 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 Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch House School in January 2011 and having spent some time working in the Vranch 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 Vranch 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 Vranch House involved in this project. We hope that in the not too distant future, our work will help to improve quality of life for many children living with this condition.



NICKY WHITE - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2010

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



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 Vranch House team in September 2017 and I am continuing to work within the 0-5 service based in Honeylands at present.



GEMMA BRANDON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2017

I currently work across both Vranch House and the Honeylands 0-5 years service. I have a varied caseload of children with neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy, orthopaedic conditions such as osteogenesis imperfecta and scoliosis and developmental difficulties such as delayed motor skill acquisition. At Vranch House I run a musculoskeletal clinic for children under 11 years and a group for children with motor co-ordination difficulties. I enjoy working as part of a dynamic and multidisciplinary team.

GEORGINA HERBERT - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2008



I have been working at Vranch 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 Vranch House.



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 outpatients 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 Vranch House team and enjoying seeing children and young people with a wide variety of issues in Honeylands, Vranch House School and as Out-patients.

RACHEL CURTIS - Therapy Admin Assistant - Joined 2018



I recently joined the Vranch House therapy department in an administrative position on a part time basis. Having worked within mortgages for the last 15 years, I am very excited to have joined the hard working and enthusiastic team at Vranch 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 Innowalk sessions and doing outpatient hydrotherapy on Friday afternoons.



JULIE LOBB - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2005

I joined Vranch 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, innowalk, etc. as required. This is a completely different role and I am enjoying this new challenge.



LYDIA KINGDOM - Therapy Admin Assistant - Joined 2016

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



REBECCA WHEELER - Business Support Manager - Joined 2012

I started work in the Vranch House Therapy Department at the beginning of 2012, having had some prior experience of the broad range of services offered by Vranch House as a volunteer. I became Clinical Administration Team Lead in October 2014, 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 Vranch House School pupils, the Therapy Department outpatients, and the hard working and enthusiastic team of Vranch House staff, makes for an enjoyable and rewarding workplace.

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.

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 (Sarah Stone, Gemma Rous and Rhiannon Powell), and two travelling up from the Exeter base one day per week. Lucy Wills joined the team as Team Lead in October 2018; she has worked for Vranch House in Exeter since 2009, and has previously covered maternity leave in the North Devon department. In November 2018 the team also welcomed a new Administrator, Kathryn McDine.

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 Sarah Stone 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.



(left to right) Lucy Wills, Gemma Rous, Sarah Stone and Kathryn McDine

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.

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!



Sue Pratt
Music Therapist

The Nurses

Nurses at Vranch 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 Vranch 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

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



STEPHANIE CLARKE-JENNINGS - Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined 2018

Having qualified in London as an Occupational Therapist in 2011, I went on to work in a variety of settings gaining invaluable experience working in the acute sector, both private and public, and working with work rehabilitation clients. I went back to study in 2013 and gained my Graduate Diploma in Primary Education, where I found my passion working with children. I continued working as an occupational therapist and worked for a private hospital as the sole occupational therapist. I recently gained my Masters Degree in Advanced Occupational Therapy in July 2018 and started working as an occupational therapist here at Vranch House in October 2018. I work part-time and split my time between outpatient services and the Vranch House School. I am also co-delivering the motor coordination group we run here for our outpatients. I love working with children and am enjoying combining my education and therapeutic training here in my new role.

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

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

And one of the following two criteria also applies;

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

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

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

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

Speech and Language Therapy Report



Michelle Weick
Highly Specialist
Speech & Language
Therapist
Joined 2017

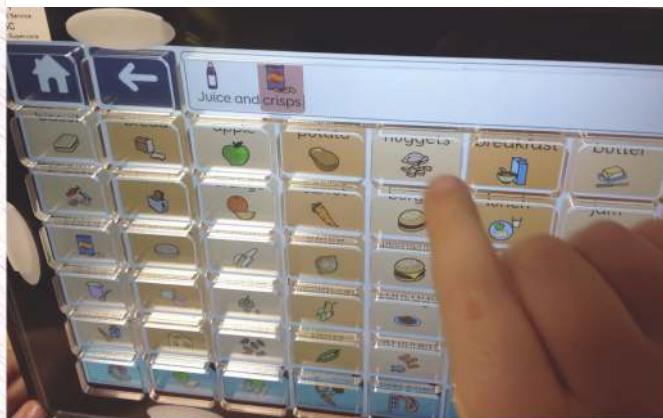
Michelle Weick leads the Speech and Language Therapy service at Vranch House. She is responsible for the speech and language therapy provision for the children who attend **Vranch House School**, and the **NEW Devon Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Intervention Service**, which supports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

Voice Output Communication Aid (VOCA)



Pretend Play Group

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.

Lunchtime Assistants

MICHALA SMITH Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2010



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

KAREN FINN Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2013



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

CATHERINE BAYFIELD Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2014



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

Lunchtime Assistants



KERSTIE DAVIES - Lunchtime & Classroom Support Assistant - Joined 2015

I joined Vranch House in 2015 as a lunchtime 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.



DI BROOKING - Relief Assistant - Joined 1982

I decided to retire from work at Vranch 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 Vranch in all capacities whenever I can.



DI STAVES - Relief Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 1987

I started work at Vranch 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.



COLEEN KELLY - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2017

I started working at Vranch 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.



MICHELLE BENNETT - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

In September 2018 I joined a friendly, dedicated and supportive team at Vranch 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.



KAY DENNIS - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2016

I started working at Vranch 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.



MELANIE LYNCH - Lunchtime Support Assistant

I was a student here at Vranch many years ago from the age of two to twelve years which I enjoyed! I have been volunteering at Vranch 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.



KERRY WHITE - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I started to work at Vranch House in October 2018 as a lunchtime support assistant, I also help with swimming sessions and other cover where needed. I have never worked with such friendly staff and wonderful children. I have a level 3 Diploma for the Children & Young People's Workforce.



VICTORIA KERR - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

Although I only recently started my job as a lunchtime support assistant I'm finding it very rewarding and the children are fantastic.



MEGGAN FROST - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I started at Vranch as a lunchtime support assistant in December 2018 and am looking forward to looking after and interacting more with the Class 1 and Nursery children. I love my job as it is very rewarding and all the staff are very helpful and lovely.

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

Lunchtime Assistants



ELANOR SHERRIFF - Lunch Time Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I have always worked in Health and Social Care, in a wide range of settings. Vranch 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. Vranch House is a happy place to be.



KIMBERLEY MORGAN - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I started at Vranch House in September 2018, 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. I love working with all the lovely children at Vranch House and feel very lucky to be part of their day.



SHERYL HOPKIN - Lunchtime Support Assistant - Joined 2018

I joined Vranch House on the 3rd December 2018 as a lunch-time assistant for Class 4. Previously, I was a primary school teaching assistant for nursery aged children through to year 4. I also

worked with children who had specific educational needs and medical needs: such as absence seizures and diabetes. My qualifications include a Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools and a Level 2 STA swimming certificate. Currently I am studying Maths GCSE two evenings a week at Exeter College in the hope to understand and help my son with his homework! I am absolutely thrilled to be working alongside such wonderful children and caring members of staff and look forward to the challenges and learning that Vranch House offers.



CAYLA WARD - Relief MTA (joined April 2016)

I came to Vranch 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 Vranch and help out when needed.

Various Roles



Simon Batstone - Groundsman/Technician - Joined 2011

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



Doug Steer
Caretaker - Joined 1978



Phil Gater - Technical Assistant

I have been involved with Vranch 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



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



Our Marketing Manager receiving a cheque from Keiron Northcott, Deputy Chief Executive of the Exeter Chiefs and Michael Caines, MBE.



Nearly there! Ben Neary and friends completing an arduous run to raise funds for Vranch House.



You did it! Ben and his friends at the end of the run which raised over £7,000 for Vranch House.



Andrew Barge
Marketing Manager

This year has been another fantastic year for Vranch House. There are a number of people and organisations that I would like to thank for their support of the charity during the financial year 2017-18.

- 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 and Neary family for their continued support
- Sainsbury's for their donation of £440
- Sharon Atkinson for raising £1340
- Kayleigh Gahagan for raising £395.
- The Clare Milne Trust for their donation of £20,000
- The pupils of Colyton Grammar School for raising £353
- The Exeter Angling Association for their continued support
- The Rotary Club of Dawlish for their donation of £500
- Loxbeare Church for their continued support
- Wild Things Ltd for their donation of £500
- TDL Lambda for their donation of £500
- The Inner Wheel Club for their continued support

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 Vranch House, we'd like to say a big thank you to all many generous supporters

Fact Sheet

What is Vranch House?

An Independent Day School in Exeter for children with significant physical difficulties, mostly with cerebral palsy. A Centre for the treatment of outpatients with *all* forms of physical difficulties. A provider of various therapies in other schools in Devon.

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

Who owns and runs it?

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

How many children do you help?

We have day places for up to 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."



Colonel Graeme Wheeler
our Chief Executive received a presentation
in December 2018 to mark his twenty-five
years of service to Vranch House.



Vranch House

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