



Vranch House

Annual Report & Accounts 2016 - 2017



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 2016 - 2017

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 ⁺⁺
	Dr G Humphreys ⁺
	Ms K Moss ⁺
	Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16) ⁺
	Mr I Norton (from 05/09/16)
⁺ Ex Officio Members	
⁺⁺ Secretary	

The persons listed above, less the ex-officio members, were the appointed Trustees and Directors of the Society for the 2016 - 2017 Financial Year

Board of Governors

Chairman:	Julia Tolman-May
Vice Chairman:	Mr A Griffin
Secretary:	Col G Wheeler
	Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16) ⁺
	Mr I Norton (from 05/09/16)
	Ms K Moss ⁺⁺
	Mrs V Lye..
	Mrs M Wood...
	Miss S Williams (to 31/12/16)...
	Miss S Tutinas...

..Staff Representative
...Parent Governors
+Head of Education
++Head of Therapies

Management Committee

Chairman:	Mrs J Tolman-May
	Mrs P Barnes (to 23/05/16)
	Mr I Norton (from 05/09/16)
	Col G Wheeler
	Ms K Moss

Principal Staff

Chief Executive
Colonel G F Wheeler MPhil., CGIA

Head of Education
Mrs P Barnes BSc(Hons), MA(SEN) (to 23/05/16) Mr I Norton BEng(Hons), BPhil, QTVI (from 05/09/16)

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

Consulting Physicians

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

Orthotist
Nina Darke

Exeter Mobility Centre

Vranch House School and Centre is:

Registered under the Charities Act 1960
Registered number 1002700

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered Number 2599511

Vranch House School is:

An Independent School approved
under the Education Act 1981

Front cover pictures:

<i>Left to Right</i>
Grace
William
Isobel

- Class 3

- Class 3

- Class 2

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT to the 2017 AGM

I am truly delighted to be able to report on another remarkable year. Graeme will give us his usual analysis of the finances but the headline is that, despite paying the largest part of the two-year construction program for the new Hydrotherapy Pool, the charity made a cash surplus of £165,278 in the audited Financial Year. This strong financial performance is all the more remarkable when there has been no inflation at all in the amount we are paid by the NHS but inflation in the economy is averaging 2.6% every year.

Throughout the year we have maintained high levels of activity in our clinical and educational services, as our two service Heads will report, whilst streamlining our methods of working to make everything we do cost efficient. Our therapists work as a united team with remarkable flexibility and willingness to meet the many challenges that medical practice and a growing population in Devon present. In Education, the Management Team made an application to the Department for Education for a license to operate a Secondary School Unit for up to twelve pupils aged from twelve to eighteen. The license was granted, suitable accommodation in the Honeylands Building was set aside for the purpose and converted and the first secondary class was up and running in September. This remarkable achievement – something we have always wanted – now enables the charity to provide schooling for children and young people from the age of two to eighteen. It will reinforce our reputation for high quality services at a very low cost and should ring-fence the school against contract changes for a good many years.

As always my thanks, and I am sure yours too, are directed at our simply outstanding staff. Vranch House is a service charity; it exists not to provide grants of money or gifts of equipment but to help children with physical difficulties meet and even extend their potential. As a result, and despite the delightful buildings and magnificent grounds on the Vranch House site, the preponderance of our income is spent on the staff (77% in the last financial year). They earn every single penny. Without them our reputation for excellence and our ability to carry out our work would be impossible.

Finally, I should not end this brief report without a word about these very special children. Our motivation – and I say “our” because our paid staff are supported by a network of volunteers, Governors and Trustees, is the children. Their cheerfulness, their willingness, their courage in adversity, their trust in us and their delight in the world around them is inspiring. It is a privilege for all of us to spend our working lives with them.

Julia Tolman-May
Chairman



Chairman
Julia Tolman-May

Annual Trustees' Report

General Report of the Board of the Society for the year ended 31 March 2017

The Board of the Society presents its report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2017.

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*)

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

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

Mrs P Barnes to 23 May 2016 and Mr I Norton from
5 September 2016 (*ex officio as Heads of Education*)

Company Secretary & Chief Executive

Colonel G Wheeler

Board of Governors

Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman

Mr A J Griffin Vice Chairman

Col G Wheeler Secretary

Mr I Norton Head of Education (from 05.09.16)

Mrs P Barnes Head of Education (to 23.05.16)

Mrs K Moss Head of Therapies

Mrs V Lye Staff member

Mrs M Wood Parent Governor

Miss S Williams Parent Governor (to 31.12.16)

Miss S Tutinas Parent Governor

Management Committee

Mrs J Tolman-May Chairman

Col G Wheeler

Mrs K Moss

Mr I Norton (from 5.09.16)

Mrs P Barnes (to 23.05.16)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

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

Appointment of Trustees

The number of Trustees can be set at any General Meeting but has rarely varied from a mean of twelve between the minimum of eight and maximum of sixteen stated in the Governing Document. Invitations to nominate Trustees are circulated every year to the membership and these nominations are ratified at the Annual General Meeting. The senior officers (Chairman and Vice Chairman) are elected every year and the Chief Executive acts as Company Secretary. Employees of the charity may be members of the charity and the four senior employees are ex officio members of the Board of Trustees but no employee is entitled to vote at any meeting of the Trustees. The Executive Committee of the charity is known as the Board of the Society and the Board may co-opt any member of the charity to fill a specialist role.

Trustee Induction & Training

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

Organisation

The Board of the Society has strategic oversight of the charity and meets three times a year. The Board establishes all policy for the general direction and

operation of the charity and meets to review those policies and to hear a record of operations. The Board employs a Chief Executive to work with a Head of Therapies and a Head of Education to oversee, direct and drive forward the Board's policies for the Clinic and the School (the principal operations of the charity). The Chief Executive has delegated powers for the day-to-day operation of the Board's policies for employment, finance, contracts, legal compliance (including Equal Opportunities), buildings and acquisitions, risk assessment and mitigation, Health and Safety and business development. To assist the Head of Education and meet statutory obligations for maintained schools, the Board has established a Board of Governors for the school. The Board of Governors has direct control of those matters bearing on the delivery of educational services; matters relating to finance, employment and resources, if not within the competence of the Governors, are referred to the Board of Trustees. The Head of 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.

Related Parties

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

Objectives and Activities

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

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

The core activities arising from these aims are the education of children with physical difficulties from the age of two to twelve at 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.

Public Benefit – General Statement

The Trustees have established a policy to review continuously all the charity's activities and the development of services to ensure that they remain consonant with the requirements of the 2006 Charities Act, and particularly with Section 4 of the Act, (the need to demonstrate Public Benefit). The charity operates in partnership with statutory bodies under guidance from the Office for the Third Sector in order to provide expertise, treatment and enhanced services to children with physical disabilities. It does not charge fees but receives about 50% of the total cost of the services it provides to the North, East & West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW CCG) and Devon County Council. Referrals to the service are made by Local Authorities and all referrals are seen for assessment and the majority of assessed referrals are retained for treatment or given a place in the school. The referral process, whether as a therapy outpatient or potential school pupil, is not controlled by the charity but by NEW CCG and Devon County Council. A school placement or therapy intervention might be deemed inappropriate at the assessment stage but only for reasons that are cogent, demonstrable and compliant with benchmarked national practice. The charity is as public a body as its statutory partners and enters into no private arrangements for individual treatment. No

member of the public is denied the services provided by the charity provided those services are assessed to be suitable and appropriate for the individual concerned.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Public Benefit - Aims and Strategies

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

- **School Aim** The school is to be organised, equipped, staffed, managed and operated to the highest national standards.
- **Strategy to Achieve Aim** The Governing Body will monitor the established Continuous Improvement Programme and the School Audit Cycle with the intention of maintaining the high OFSTED gradings of "outstanding" and "good" achieved in 1996, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2015.
- **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 whilst continuing to invest in the re-build of the Hydrotherapy Pool.

The high quality of service delivery has been maintained despite significant increases in the number of out

patient referrals and in the number of school pupils placed in the school with complex needs. There was an average of twenty-four children on the school roll and over 1,800 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 is in the process of developing a Fine Motor programme to complement it.

The Trustees are pleased to report the effectiveness of the charity's ongoing and significant investment in Continuous Professional Development for its staff. All the therapists, teachers and support staff are engaged in or have access to programmes of learning some of which will lead to first or second degrees. All the staff employed to have direct contact with children are trained to the very highest Safeguarding level (Level 3).

Optech, a non-profit making service run by the charity which designs, manufactures and installs guided mobility equipment throughout England and Wales, had its best year in 2008. The recession has contracted the education and domestic markets and activity levels have been challenging. The contribution made by the Mobility Project Manager and our Technical Consultant to many of the other 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 7.2 weeks against a national target of eighteen weeks, all service development targets were met in the year under review and the poll of out-patient opinion shows that over 97.8% of our referrals place Vranch House in the top category, 2.2% in the next one down and none at all in the lower three categories. Our record of never having received a formal complaint continues.

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

Plans for Future Periods

The new Service Led Agreement with Devon County

Council and NEW CCG has operated since the 1st of April 2011. The Agreement set a target for charitable investment in these statutory services of no more than 35% of the total cost. The total contract value has not increased for nine 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 has been invited to consider the possibility of developing a secondary education provision so that children at Vranch House primary school could continue their education with the charity after the age of twelve. If the invitation is formally expressed, the charity will conduct a formal feasibility study.

The charity continues to establish benchmarks in clinical and educational practice in order to meet its goal of not just meeting but exceeding service delivery standards. Preparations for the new OFSTED regime continue and programmes of research led by our Clinical Director will inform the continuous development of our clinical services.

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

Income & Service Risks

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

1. Income Growth The next five years are likely to include a period of between two and three years in which national fiscal disciplines and retrenchment in public service investment continues. Despite this the charity is in discussion with its statutory partners to develop income commensurate with the service improvements we have demonstrated over the last 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 around 57% of the true costs of the statutory services provided by the charity is funded by the charity). The contract has a 25-year life (until 2036) and the only threat to it is a sustained or existential failure to meet the service quality standards. The charity contribution is largely met from 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 Probit. The on-going review and development of these risk assessments and the policies and procedures that flow from them is of the highest priority as essential elements of the charity's strategic interest.

Financial Review

The Statement of Financial Activities shows total income for the year ending the 31st of March 2017 of £1,908,325 (£1,743,047 in 2016), an increase of £165,278. The Society's Net Current Assets stand at £1,259,401 (£1,245,166 in 2016). This increase of £14,235 is the combination of an increase in cash balances of £18,230, a decrease in debtors of £46,419, a decrease in creditors of £79,533 and a decrease in stock of £649. The Society has Net Assets amounting to £6,298,402 (£6,056,466 in 2016) - an increase mainly generated by the investment in the new pool building.

The net income and net movement in funds for the year is £241,936 (£57,586 in 2016). Adding back depreciation of £138,044 (a non-monetary expense) to this net income, the Society made a cash surplus in the year of £379,980 (£196,891 last year).

Total income from Charitable activities of £1,712,830 (£1,614,957 in 2016) includes the contract income from the combined contract for clinical and educational services. Total income from donations and all other sources is £195,495. 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.

Reserves Policy & Going Concern

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

Investment Policy

The Memorandum and Articles provide the Trustees with the power to make investments as they choose but consonant with current Charity Commission advice. The charity's cash assets are invested in a state-owned Business Reserve but we will utilise opportunities for low-risk investment if interest rates improve.

Pay and Emolument Policy for All Staff

The Trustees serve as volunteers and eschew reward and expenses.

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

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

ASSEVERATIONS

Trustees' Responsibilities in relation to the Financial

Statements

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and financial statements in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- b) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- c) Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Charity will continue in operation.
- d) Observe the methods and principles laid out in the applicable SORP for registered charities.
- e) State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

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

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

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

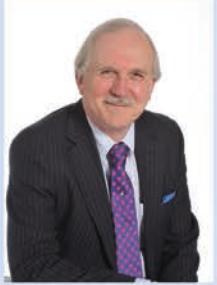
Auditors

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

Approval of the Directors' and Strategic Reports

The Directors' and Strategic Reports were approved by the Board of the Society (the Board of Directors and Trustees) on the 14th of November 2017 and signed on its behalf.

J Tolman-May
Chairman
November 2017



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 2017

The figures used in this article are taken from the Auditor's Report for the 2016 – 2017 Financial Year. The headline financial news is included in the report of the Directors and Trustees but the following financial information is worth highlighting:

- Income increased by £165,278 from £1,743,047 to £1,908,325 but Debtors and Pre-Payments decreased by £46,419 from £74,363 to £27,944 simply because of the absence of capital project pre-payments for the new Hydrotherapy Pool. These trends are not significant.
- Net Current Assets increased by £14,235 from £1,245,166 to £1,259,401 largely as a result of capital investment in the new pool building but Total Net Funds increased by £241,936 from £6,056,466 to £6,298,402.
- Fixed Assets increased despite depreciation by £227,701 from £4,811,300 to £5,039,001. 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 £137,886 carried as a non-monetary expense the charity made an operating surplus of £241,936 but with Depreciation discounted a net cash surplus of £379,980 was generated (£196,891 last year).
- It is a commendable reflection of internal fiscal controls that total expended resources decreased in the year under audit by £19,072.
- We have maintained the high number of pupils in the school and outpatients seen by the clinic whilst continuing 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). 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 practices. 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 statutory partners have frozen our funding at 2008 levels; that in 2018 we are embarking 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, having 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	2017	2016	2015
Gross Income	£1,908,325	£1,743,047	£1,630,594
Gross Expenditure	£1,743,047	£1,685,461	£1,699,560
Cash Gain/Loss for the Year	£165,278	£57,586	-£68,966
Gain/Loss less Depreciation	£379,980	£196,891	£55,488

Summary of Key Financial Ratios

Debtors as a Percentage of:	2017	2016	2015	2014
Total Funds	0.44%	1.22%	0.53%	0.43%
Creditors as a Percentage of:				
Current Assets	4.00%	10.45%	5.00%	11.80%
As a Percentage of Total Funds				
Profit/Loss for the Year *	6.00%	3.25%	0.90%	1.98%
Revenue Costs	26.45%	28%	28.30%	28.7%

*Profit is shown net of depreciation.

Income/Expenditure



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

2. The Auditor's Report for 2016/17 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

I. What have been the significant changes this year?

- Class changes
- VIEW Curriculum
- Commissioning of secondary provision at Vranch House
- The introduction of Earwig Academic

1a. Class Changes

As the growth in class numbers has required, there have been further changes to teachers and support staff in each of our classes this year. Each class team is still led by a designated teacher and typically comprises a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA), a Lead Therapy Assistant (LTA) and a Teaching Assistant (TA), as well as part-time support from our Meal Time Assistants (MTA). Where a pupil has particularly acute medical needs, these teams may also have a Health Care Assistant (HCA). HLTA are able to cover individual sessions in cover for the class teachers and will hold at least a Level 3 qualifications. The LTAs work closely with the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy staff allocated to Vranch House to ensure delivery of best practice in classes regarding postural management, positioning, exercise programs

and use of specialist equipment to promote physical development.

This year we welcomed two new class teachers to the Vranch House team: Evelyn Gawen in Class 3 and Zoe Gilbert in our new Class 4. Both Zoe and Evelyn come to us having had a wide and varied experience of teaching and supporting children and young people with SEN and have already had a positive impact on the teaching and learning at Vranch House.

The current staff allocation for each class is as follows:

Class 1 (Pupils: 6)	Class 2 (Pupils: 6)	Class 3 (Pupils: 6)	Class 4 (Pupils: 3)
<p>Teacher: Dee Bradshaw HLTA: Ronnie Lye LTA: Helen House MTAs: Michala Smith Kerstie Davies (P/T) Mel Lynch (P/T) Lauren Millington</p>	<p>Teacher: Chloe Bond HLTA: Chelsea Armstrong LTA: Debbie Prout TA: Charlotte Davey (P/T) MTAs: Kay Dennis Coleen Kelly</p>	<p>Teacher: Evelyn Gawen TAs: Sandra Selley Adrian Jackson HCA: Tammy Brown LTA: Helen House MTAs: Karen Finn Teresa Sprague Charlotte Davey</p>	<p>Teacher: Zoe Gilbert HLTA: Sam Woodcock LTA: Julie Lobb MTAs: Laura Madden Adelle Gale</p>

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

1b. 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'. This pupil needs-led and highly individualised approach to teaching and learning is the core of our Education provision at Vranch House and covers three broad areas of developmental progress: Communication & Cognition, Physical Development and Experience and Expression. Recent developments include our Specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Michelle Weick, really driving forward the Communication & Cognition domain. Together with other Vranch House therapists, she has also developed 'People Play', a new approach to fostering early peer-interaction and social skills.

A broad outline of this curriculum can be seen below:

Domain	Vranch Individual Education and Wellbeing (VIEW) Curriculum						
	Communication & Cognition		Physical Development			Experience and Expression	
Areas of development	Pre-intentional Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive (understanding) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gestures - Understanding of nouns+verbs - Attention to adults/peers and environment • Expressive (using) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Split attention - Turn taking, eye contact - Split attention - Initiating 'conversation' with peers 	Intentional Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive (understanding) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working memory - Attention to an environment - Joint attention - Concept of size - Concept of time - Language of position • Expressive (using) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining a dialogue with peers/adults - Accept/agree, reject/refuse, gain attention, request and respond - Share information 	Emotional and Social advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expresses likes and dislike (preferences) - Impulse control - Emotional control, identifies and names: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Emotions of others > Own emotions > Reason for emotion - Indicates preferences in people/events/objects - Flexible thinking - Self-monitoring/ regulation - Planning and prioritising - Task initiation - Organisation 	Physical Wellbeing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body schema/map - Weight bearing - Changing position - Physiotherapy and OT plans - Core strength - Recognising and expressing pain/ discomfort - Endurance and dexterity - Personal hygiene routines 	Working towards independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientation and mobility - Developing modes of movement - Engaging with safe and unfamiliar places - Concept of money - Overcoming obstacles 	Integrating the senses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proprioception - Cause & effect - Residual Vision - Residual hearing - MSI - Tactile and Haptic - Smell & Taste - Sensory Integration - De-sensitising 	Exploration and Creativity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooking - Movement to music - Making music - Exploring art media and methods - Craftwork - Horticulture

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

1c. Commissioning of secondary provision at Vranch House

It has long been a request from Parents and Carers of children attending Vranch House that we extend our school to include secondary aged pupils. The Management Team of Vranch House have repeatedly offered to provide this to our Commissioners, Devon County Council (DCC) 0-25 SEN Team and, in May 2017, Vranch House were formally asked by the DCC 0-25 SEN Team to explore how we might deliver this provision. In September 2017 we opened our first secondary class, Class 4, with four pupils and Zoe Gilbert as a new class teacher for Vranch House. This new provision now forms part of our Core Offer and has received positive feedback from all those who have accessed this exciting new provision so far. The ASDAN 'Transition Challenge' program of work has also proven to be wholly complimentary to the VIEW Curriculum in developing skills for adulthood and has given a meaningful framework to trips out to access local services and engage with the local community.

1d. The introduction of Earwig Academic

Assessment of developmental progress against our highly individualised and bespoke VIEW curriculum requires an assessment tool that can be tailored to meet our needs as a staff. After a great deal of research and comparison, I found that the online software offered by Earwig Academic fits this brief perfectly.

The assessment area within Earwig can accommodate all conventional assessment structures and this has allowed us to upload the developmental targets of the VIEW Curriculum for use as our assessment criteria. Having our evidence capture and assessment marking forms housed in one software package means that staff are now able to complete the whole process; from evidence capture to assessment and evaluation of this evidence, in one highly efficient and short input on a tablet device or PC.

The introduction of 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.

2. Outcomes for pupils at Vranch House School

2a. Progress and Achievement of our pupils

Last year, following a scrutiny of achievement against outcomes set at Annual Reviews, I set myself and the teaching staff the following tasks:

- *To increase the number of targets 'Achieved' and reduce the number of 'Partially Achieved' targets by working closely with the teachers to ensure all targets set are observable, focussed in term of progress anticipated and realistically achievable within an academic year (or with few exceptions, by the end of a Key Stage).*
- *To reduce the number of 'Not Achieved' targets by ensuring outcomes are not critically dependent on a pupil being in full health for the whole academic year.*

Comparison of outcome data from 2015-16 compared to the 2016-17 data

Academic year	Outcomes Achieved	Outcomes Partially Achieved	Outcomes Not Achieved
2015-16	35.41%	47.52%	17.07%
2016-17	33.82%	33.90%	30.35%
	↓1.59%	↓13.62%	↑13.28

Although the number of 'Partially Achieved' outcomes had, as per the goal set last year, decreased since last analysis of outcomes data, this had not been due to a corresponding increase in 'Achieved' targets. Conversely in fact, and of most concern, was the marked increase in the number of targets now being recorded as 'Not Achieved'. As with most numerical analysis of data relating to the measurement of human activity, these figures do not give the complete story of the activity behind them.

The individual development-focussed nature of the VIEW Curriculum has seen many of the previous Annual Review Outcomes, set when the curriculum was subject-driven, become outmoded and no longer appropriate. As we are still part-way through the journey of moving all Outcomes for pupils from previous subject-based ones to VIEW-based in content, these now-irrelevant Outcomes have been recorded as 'Not Achieved' as there is no category of 'No Longer Appropriate'.

Other Outcomes marked 'Not Achieved' were phrased '*By the end of Key Stage 2...*', or similar; a period of time covering three school academic years and chronological four years. Framing an Outcome with success tied to an end-behaviour expected after four years has meant that we cannot legitimately state that these targets were even 'Partially Achieved' at the time of the Annual Review, so 'Not Achieved' was recorded. We are still part-way through replacing such inappropriate Outcomes with smaller-step VIEW-linked Outcomes that describe expected small-step progress achievable by the next Annual Review (twelve months from the date of Annual Review).

I will of course continue to support and ensure rigour in the setting of outcomes, and achievement against them, for all pupils at Vranch House each academic year. In future reports however I will look to use the VIEW curriculum data captured by Earwig to give a truer account of pupil progress. I will continue to produce the percentages of Outcomes review data (as above), but will do so with a narrative for fluctuations over those from the previous year, as opposed to setting perhaps unachievable increases or reductions in percentages 'Achieved' or otherwise.

3. 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. Sound progress has been made against the SDP for 2017/18 and the main points of focus for this academic year under Ofsted 'Areas of Development' are as follows: (see graph overleaf).

Area for development	Action for development
A. Effectiveness of Leadership & Management	A1 Implementation of revised Induction programme for new staff A2 Provision of Post 12 education and services A3 PMR and Wellbeing supervisions to be introduced for HLTA's
B. Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment	B1 Development of the VIEW Curriculum B2 Develop the secondary provision offer B3 Earwig Academic to be effectively used to produce statistics on progress against the VIEW Curriculum B4 Further improve use of AAC across the school
C. Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare	C1 Replace RM Integris with a non-MiS reliant method of recording and reporting pupil attendance C2 Further improve Parental/Carer engagement through extended use of Earwig Academic C3 Introduce half termly Ability, Behaviour and Cognition (ABC) award assemblies
D. Effectiveness of Early Years Provision	D1 Staff Training on writing Outcomes and setting targets D2 Repeat audit of Outcomes achieved by class and by Key Stage
E. Outcomes for Pupils	E1 EYFS to be mapped across to the VIEW Curriculum E2 Earwig Academic to be used to capture EYFS progress E3 Gain Parent/Carer input to completing the EYFS profile

The satisfaction questionnaire for parents was issued in January 2018, 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 hope to publish these on the Vranch House website in the near future.



BEVERLEY SIMCOX
School Secretary
Joined April 1988

Yet another year has flown by and during that time we have seen some changes to the staff and children, saying farewell to some and welcoming others. On the school side we were particularly pleased when the new Secondary School opened in September 2017 and this is a very exciting development.

In July 2017 three pupils left the school, two transferring full-time to their mainstream placements and one joining his sibling at an alternative special school. Four children transferred from Vranch House primary to our new secondary setting, one new child joined the early years and other younger children increased their hours to full time as they had reached statutory school age. 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.



**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 ten years and as a Deputy Play Leader in a mainstream playgroup for four 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) and I am hoping to continue with my studies and complete a Masters in SEN in the very near future. 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 three classes in our primary section and have now found myself back to where I started with the early year's class (class 1).

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 LYE
Higher Level Teaching Assistant
Joined 1995

Since I joined Vranch the school has seen many changes. The positive difference in each child however, can be subtle to dramatic but always wonderful to see. I have always felt very privileged to be part of that process. Personally I find it very rewarding being part of such a caring and intuitive team.



HELEN HOUSE
Therapy & Learning 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.



Felix meeting Henry Blaze the puppy.



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

Therapy & Learning 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.

Class 2 trip to Haldon forest



CHARLOTTE DAVEY

Teaching Assistant

Joined 2012

I joined Vranch House in 2012 as a lunch-time support assistant. I recently became a part-time teaching assistant and I love it, I enjoy learning new things and assisting the children with various things.



Group music therapy - Isabel, Reuben, Misia



CHELSEA ARMSTRONG

Higher Level Teaching
Assistant

Joined 2010

I first came to Vranch House to do work experience during my studies. After completing my diploma in childcare, learning and development, I started volunteering as I enjoyed my placement at Vranch so much. I am now the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) in Class 2 and am doing my foundation degree in early childhood studies.



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 been working with children and adults with special needs for over ten years now. 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.

TAMMY BROWN

**Health Care Assistant/
Teaching Assistant**
Joined 2008



I have been working at Vranch House since 2008, prior to which I worked within early years settings. I am currently working in Class 3 as a one-to-one Health Care Assistant/Teaching Assistant. I also help out the school nurses with the healthcare needs of the children at Vranch.

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



Faith Class 3



Class 3 Josh

ADRIAN JACKSON

Teaching Assistant
Joined 2015

I joined the Vranch House team in 2015 and am currently a teaching assistant in Class 3. I enjoy supporting the children in their learning.



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. I am looking forward to teaching at Vranch House in their first Upper School class: Class 4!



Class 3 Caitlin

JULIE LOBB

Therapy & Learning

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 four classes and learnt so much about the children, no two days are the same.

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

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

SAMANTHA WOODCOCK

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 and currently studying BSL signing.

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



Class 3 William



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 with children who present with a variety of physical conditions. These conditions include cerebral palsy, idiopathic toe-walking, hypermobility syndrome, motor coordination difficulties, developmental difficulties, and problems with posture and walking. I also cover the physiotherapy needs of the students who attend Southbrook School in Exeter. I see the children either at their schools, homes or Vranch House clinics.

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



LUCY 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. I am currently working with children aged 0-19 years, splitting my time between the outpatients department and the community, where I visit children with physical difficulties in their mainstream schools to support school staff and children in their physical management. I work closely with a number of professionals and services, including school staff, paediatricians, orthopaedic consultants, orthotics and wheelchair services, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, and advisory teachers, as well as the individual children and their families. I continue to enjoy the variety of work my caseload involves, and helping children to reach their full potential, which is very rewarding.



CHARLOTTE MEARING - 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 helped 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. I am looking forward to being able to work more closely with the therapy team at Vranch House in my new role.

LIZ HUTCHERSON - Specialist Children's Physiotherapist - Joined 2014



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

MARK POOK - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2017



I started working at Vranch House in September 2017. I previously worked in the care sector since 2012, starting off in nurseries then progressing on to agency work where I gained experience working in play schemes, schools, residential care homes, supported living and family assessment centres.

I have enjoyed my time at Vranch House so far, I am enjoying the responsibility I have been given and the new challenges this presents. I am keen to improve my skills and gain more experience in the therapy department.

REBECCA WHEELER - Practice Manager - Joined 2012



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



HELEN HICKS - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2006

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



LYDIA KINGDOM - 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.

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.

VICKI BEATTIE - Therapy Assistant - Joined 2015



I joined Vranch House at the end of September 2015. I have been working within the Educational sector since 2005 gaining various qualifications and running my own Nursery Class for two years.

Since being at Vranch House I have been responsible for the Rebound Therapy sessions in school, and I continue to support and assist Liz (Physiotherapist) in physiotherapy assessments and specific therapeutic activities.



THE ELLEN TINKHAM TEAM

GILL SCOTT – Physiotherapist

CLAIRE HARRADINE – Technical Instructor

HANNAH CHARLES – Physiotherapy Assistant

CARLY BUDD – Physiotherapy Assistant

We work as part of the wider team of Vranch House based at Ellen Tinkham School 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 weekly 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.

North Devon Community Children's Physiotherapy Service 2018

The Vranch North Devon Team is based at Barnstaple Health Centre.

Our team in North Devon normally comprises three WTE Physiotherapy posts shared between four Physiotherapists, Sally Bunney, Sarah Stone, Rhiannon Powell and Gemma Rous. A further fulltime post is covered by our Clinical Administrator Caroline Bricknell and Therapy Assistant Charlotte Thomas. The team work really well together which goes a long way towards coping with the increasing numbers and demands of referrals.

At present we are depleted by one Physiotherapist for delightful reasons. Gemma Rous gave birth to a beautiful little girl on the 28th October 2017, Florence Lily. Subsequently over the next year Gemma will be concentrating on being a wonderful mum and developing her baby handling skills even further. The rest of the team hope to make use of watching a beautiful healthy baby at close hand explore and develop her motor skills.

To support us during Gemma's maternity leave, we have had Lucy Wills and Hannah McFadden, two excellent Physiotherapists from Vranch, each for half a day, most weeks. This has been a great help and allowed us to work closely with our Vranch colleagues.

We continue to work closely with the Orthotist, Tim Constantine, arranging to see children together for joint assessment and discussion where concerns are complex. His advice and support is highly valued by all. As is the Exeter Mobility Team who offer clinics at Pathfield Special School and Barnstaple Health Centre if needed.

The Children's Physiotherapy team continue to provide treatment and advice in a number of different settings depending on the need, such as;

- Barnstaple Health Centre Outpatient Department
- Home, where the child is too fragile to travel or where equipment requires setting up or monitoring
- Within Mainstream School/Nursery settings
- Special Schools
- Venues where joint assessments are arranged with other professionals and parents/carers
- North Devon District Hospital Children's ward and Special Care Baby Unit where a child has been referred for neurological assessment and training for staff

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

- Neurological - Cerebral Palsy
- Neuromuscular – Muscular Dystrophy, SMA
- Congenital – Spina Bifida
- Developmental Coordination Disorders
- Developmental Delay
- Postural and gait Abnormalities (including Hypermobility and Musculo-skeletal conditions) – in the young child (i.e. primary school age)

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

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



(Back row, left to right);

**Caroline Bricknell, Rhiannon Powell,
Charlotte Thomas, Sarah Stone,**

(Front row, left to right); **Sally Bunney, Gemma Rous**

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

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.



Nina Darke
Orthotist

The Nurses

Nurse's 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!



Ruth Whitthorn
Nurse
Joined 1983



Marie Brown
Nurse
Joined 014

Occupational Therapy

JANELLE PENFOLD



Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2012

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

I continue to lead the occupational therapy team and we have a team of three therapists, between us we cover the outpatient service, Vranch House School and the specialist wheelchair service.

I have recently taken on a new role of delivering the training of 'High Five' fine motor skills programme to schools across Devon.

LUCY ABBS



Specialist Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined: 2016

I joined the Vranch House Therapy Team in the summer 2016 having recently qualified as an Occupational Therapist. I now work with children in mainstream schools and those who attend Vranch House School. Prior to becoming an Occupational Therapist I had an exciting career in musical theatre performing professionally and teaching acting, singing, dance and yoga to all ages. I also spent several years travelling and working in different settings; including an occupational therapy intern in India working in a developing school for children with disabilities and paediatric sensory clinic; another time I joined a small missionary team of medical professionals on a trip to Haiti. I am passionate about working in paediatrics and extremely grateful to Vranch House for providing me with a fantastic opportunity to use and further develop my skills.

Specialist Wheelchair Service



HELEN NORTH - Children's Occupational Therapist - Joined 2015

I am at Vranch House two days a week working within the outpatient team. Alongside this I am 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.



Misia is Cinderella

Speech and Language Therapy Report



Denise Hutchinson
Speech & Language
Teaching Assistant
Joined 1989

Michelle Weick now leads the Speech and Language Therapy service at Vranch House and is assisted by Denise Hutchinson and Mark Pook. Together they are 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.

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, or support to access the NHS AAC Specialist Assessment Service (provided by Bristol Communication Aid Service/ Dame Hannah Rogers Trust).



Michelle Weick
Specialist Speech
& Language
Consultant
Joined 2017

a b c d e f g h i j k l m						
Please don't keep on.	past	future	opposite	not	+ ing	
I'm joking						
I don't know						
I'm telling the truth						
It's not on my board						
I'm lying.						
I don't understand						
I want to talk about something else now						
talking book please						
may I go to the toilet						
now						
about						

King Elliot



At Vranch House School, the team strives to ensure that a total communication approach and environment is embedded into daily life. This includes the use of verbal language, gesture, Makaton signing, symbols and Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCA) used by pupils to communicate, and by staff to enhance the pupil's understanding. In addition, the team have recently introduced a school-wide 'Play Programme' in collaboration with physiotherapy and occupational therapy that focuses on developing key communication and interaction skills. The team continue to work closely with other therapy staff, class teachers, support staff and families to ensure each child has access to continuous and consistent communication support.

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 Class 3 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.



TERESA SPRAGUE - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2015

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



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.



ROSIE WHITTAKER - Relief Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2018



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, so when I got the job at Vranch I was delighted. I currently work with the children as a lunch-time support assistant. Everyone has made me feel so welcome and the children are a pleasure to be with.



LAURA MADDEN - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2016

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



MELANIE LYNCH - Lunchtime Support Assistant

I was a student here at Vranch many years ago from the age of 2 to 12 years which I enjoyed!

I have been volunteering at Vranch for over ten years and I am now also a permanent lunchtime support assistant two days a week. I have lots of fun and love spending time doing different activities with the children and staff.



LAUREN MILLINGTON - Lunchtime Assistant - Joined 2018

I began working at Vranch house as a lunchtime assistant in January 2018. Everyone has been really welcoming and I very much enjoy spending time with the children everyday.

Kitchen Staff

Our lunches are delivered from the hospital. We sort the meals out i.e. mash/cut them up as required or sort special diets in time for when the children come into the hall.

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

Jean Penn & Dawn Street



Various Roles



Simon Batstone - Groundsman/Technician - Joined 2011

Having spent twenty-eight years at 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.



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.)



Doug Steer
Caretaker -
Joined 1978



Sue Phillips, our Finance Officer
celebrates 25 years at Vranch House

Marketing Manager's Report



Grecian the Lion – the mascot of Exeter City FC came and gave out the medals at our sports day



The Exeter Foundation, the charity of the Exeter Chiefs rugby club are wonderful supporters of Vranch House



A kind donation, once more, from the Foresters Friendly Society



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 2016-17.

- 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
- Krispies of Exmouth for raising £5,412 for the hydrotherapy pool rebuild
- Alan Harding for raising £1,371
- The Exeter Round Table for their donation of £500
- The 'Walk for Vranch' families and supporters for raising £3,107
- The Garfield Weston Foundation for their donation of £15,000
- The Wolfson Foundation for their donation of £45,000
- The Peter Harrison Foundation for their donation of £30,000
- The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation for their donation of £10,000
- Tesco Exeter for their donation of a new Christmas Tree, decorations and £500
- The West Hill Church, Ottery St Mary for their donation of £550

All donations during this year 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 50% of the total £500,000 cost of the rebuild

Vranch House is a fantastic place to work, with wonderful, staff, pupils and patients and we're all thankful to our 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 2 to 18 years, outpatients are mostly under 17 years.

What problems do they have?

Pupils all have significant physical difficulties, most have cerebral palsy (spasticity). Outpatients have a wider range of conditions, some comparatively mild.

What causes cerebral palsy?

It is caused by an injury or malformation to the part of the brain that controls movement, this injury often occurs at the time of birth.

What are its effects?

Messages from the brain get jumbled up on route to the muscles, causing stiffness, jerky or unwanted movements. This makes it hard, sometimes impossible for children to walk, use their hands and speak.

Can cerebral palsy be cured?

No, but its effects can be greatly reduced by appropriate treatment at an early age.

Do the children have other problems?

Yes, many do. They include:

- * Learning difficulties
- * Speech & language difficulties
- * Problems with sight & hearing
- * Feeding & swallowing difficulties
- * Emotional & behavioural difficulties

What treatment do you provide?

Teaching is integrated with intensive yet sensitive physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, occupational therapy and speech & language therapy.

What services do you provide outside the school?

Our physiotherapists treat pupils with disabilities in mainstream schools and specific special schools in Devon. A team of four physiotherapists operate exclusively in North Devon.

We have a growing number of innovative projects in the community, many in partnership with bodies such as schools, universities, Community Trusts and Health, Education and Social Services.

Opportunity Technology Centre

Optech is a new centre to provide assessment, review and training programmes for computer access to the curriculum, early mobility, multi-sensory activities, communication and toys and play.

Who provides funds?

No fees are charged to parents. The Local Education Authority provides funds for basic schooling and the Health Authorities provide core funding for salaries for our professional staff. We supplement this funding by 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 2015 said: *"All pupils achieve well over time, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy, because of good teaching and the strong teamwork between education and therapy staff. The school has continued to improve well since the last inspection. Pupils love coming to school because of their close relationships with staff and the exciting range of learning activities on offer. Staff are very committed to pupils' well-being and take every opportunity to promote pupils' personal development so that behaviour is outstanding. Provision for the early years is outstanding, so that children make an excellent start to their school career."*



Exeter MP, Ben Bradshaw joined us in our 'Walk for Vranch House'



Vranch House

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