

# Inspection of Vbranch House School

Pinhoe Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 8AD

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Inspection dates: 1 to 3 July 2025

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Vranch House is an inspiring place to learn, where pupils thrive. Pupils achieve physical, social and academic milestones that surpass even their parents' and carers' expectations. The school works innovatively with many external agencies to provide pupils with the very best medical and technological support. This helps pupils realise their full academic potential. The partnership between the educational and therapy offer is seamless. This means pupils learn to walk, communicate in their own way, learn and make exceptional progress from their starting points.

Because pupils' needs are so well met, their behaviour is impeccable and they feel safe. Staff anticipate pupils' needs and provide support when they need it. Pupils are tolerant and respectful when staff provide medical support. They enjoy showing off their learning to visitors. Pupils are a delight to interact with.

Pupils cherish the many opportunities they get to discover new talents and interests. They are empowered to have a voice by contributing to the 'Vranch House magazine'. Pupils decided to write 'We have disabilities, but they don't define us', which encapsulates the vision and ambition of this school. They see the tangible impact of their actions. For example, pupils work with local department stores to myth-bust on disabilities and increase disabled access.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The school has created an exceptionally well designed and thoughtful curriculum, called the 'Vranch Individual Education and Wellbeing' (VIEW) curriculum. This is bespoke to each child. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Pupils' school-specific plans contain measurable and timely targets. The curriculum is successfully adapted to meet their needs. The school has carefully considered the most important knowledge each pupil needs to learn, both academically and therapeutically, for their next stage. As a result, pupils make great strides. For example, pupils learn to make sounds, progressing to signing, symbols and then their specialist devices to communicate. Children in early years learn to recognise numbers and how to add these together. Older pupils engage in a range of qualifications, often pursuing their interests, for example in video games. The outcomes pupils achieve are impressive, with most achieving these qualifications.

The school keeps up to date with the latest research and methods to support its pupils. Staff are experts in the pupils they serve and the support they provide. Teachers across the school use strategies to help pupils to learn tremendously well. For example, they clearly articulate new vocabulary and repeat this so that pupils can hear it several times. They offer carefully considered choices for pupils in all areas of learning, so that pupils can use their devices to interact with learning. This means all pupils can be fully involved.

'Communication and cognition' are at the heart of the VIEW curriculum. Pupils learn to read and interact with stories in line with their bespoke curricula. The specific sounds and letters pupils need to learn are deliberately and progressively planned and sequenced. The school is highly ambitious, with some pupils reading chapter books, listening to audio books and some entering creative writing competitions with their work being published in magazines. Pupils exclaim with delight when it is time to read or interact with a book. Pupils who learn phonics read books that match the sounds they are confident in. This further consolidates pupils' passion for reading.

Pupils' behaviour is remarkable. They intrinsically know how to behave because staff have taught them explicitly what is expected from the moment they arrive at the school. Consequently, an aura of calmness pervades the school. Attentive staff are particularly attuned to when pupils are in pain, offering alternative suggestions. Pupils' pastoral needs are superbly met so that they can focus on their learning. Consequently, pupils have extremely high engagement in their learning, often with sustained concentration. The school skilfully uses music as a tool to bring pupils together. For example, pupils joyfully sing their whole school song with the powerful lyrics 'I'll put my trust in you, that's what friends do.' This helps pupils understand positive and healthy relationships. The school is tenacious in its approach to tackling non-attendance. Consequently, pupils' attendance is excellent.

The praiseworthy wider offer beyond the academic is supporting pupils to be immensely well prepared for life beyond Vbranch House. Pupils are empowered to contribute to society and be active citizens. They write reviews about local accessible places so that members of the public can benefit. The school places no limits on pupils. For example, where possible, they engage in appropriately adapted work experience. Pupils learn about other cultures through expression. For example, they created beautiful Japanese cherry blossom artwork. Leaders have been innovative in the way that they have installed traffic lights in the playground so that pupils can repeatedly practise crossing the road safely. This has meant pupils have learned this essential life skill. This is exemplary and worthy of being shared. The school works tirelessly to forge meaningful partnerships with agencies and other schools to ensure a seamless transition for pupils.

The proprietor understands their statutory duties well and has recruited an awe-inspiring staff team. Leaders are rigorously held to account for the quality of education. This ensures the school consistently meets the independent school standards, including schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Those responsible for governance know the school's strengths and areas they continue to refine. Inspirational leadership at all levels has guided this school to success. They continually strive for more, seeing the curriculum as ever evolving. They lead the school with integrity and modesty, seeking out new ideas at every opportunity. Parents, the local authority and the virtual school are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Staff work together in harmony to transform the lives of the pupils of Vbranch House.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113571
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6007
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10391708
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	59
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	5
<b>Proprietor</b>	Vranch House Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Julia Tolman-May
<b>CEO</b>	Kate Moss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kayleigh Price Susanna Mitchell (Head of therapies)
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£29,953 to £40,727
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 468333
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.vranchhouse.org">www.vranchhouse.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:mail@vranchhouse.org">mail@vranchhouse.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 to 3 November 2022

## Information about this school

- Ofsted conducted a standard inspection of the school in November 2022, and the school was judged to be outstanding. The school met all the standards at this inspection.
- The current headteacher took up post in April 2023. A head of therapies was also appointed in April 2023. Both leaders are overseen by a chief executive officer (CEO).
- Vranth House School is an independent school for pupils aged 2 to 19. Pupils are referred to the school by their local authority.
- All pupils have an EHC plan. All pupils have severe communication difficulties alongside complex medical needs.
- The school provides a range of therapies, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, hydrotherapy, hippotherapy, speech and language therapy and music therapy.
- The school offers therapeutic outpatient care across the local authority.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the leadership team including the CEO.
- The lead inspector held discussions with governors and the proprietor, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, physical development and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of

pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff. Inspectors also met with staff throughout the inspection to gather their views. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Lakmini Harkus, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Hannon

Ofsted Inspector

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