

Dr KAREN ARNOLD

My Lord and Chancellor,

Dr Karen Arnold has made a powerful impact as an entrepreneur in the commercial and charitable sectors, particularly as Chief Executive of The Enterprise and Skills Company, which works with young people from all social and economic backgrounds helping them to develop entrepreneurial enterprise and employability skills. Karen and the ESC engage with between 5,000 and 7,000 students every year, in schools across the UK. In our own area her annual enterprise challenge attracts much interest and support from schools and local businesses.

The Enterprise and Skills Company vividly reflects Karen's personal story and her approach to life. She is passionate about delivering 'a high-quality, high-impact, life-changing message that empowers young people to be successful in business and future careers'. This deep personal commitment drives Karen's role as a front-line Chief Executive: she leads ESC's enterprise programmes personally, as a motivational leader, speaker, and role model for young people; and she is regarded as a constant source of inspiration, ideas – and fun. ESC designs and presents enterprise programmes for students across the UK to encourage and inspire entrepreneurial behaviour and develop skills including teamwork, creativity and risk-taking. And it is both forward-looking and imaginative: for example, it includes an event in Mandarin for Chinese students.

Karen is a very gifted communicator – a performer, in fact – so it is no surprise to find that earlier in her richly varied career she worked in theatre and commercial radio. This experience colours her enterprise presentations, and also her teaching, tutoring and mentoring: 'I teach economics with shoes and handbags', she says. A strong sense of style, and an inclusive engagement with popular culture, comes across in her *Yes Chef!* programme – Bournemouth's answer to MasterChef for young and aspiring cooks – and her versions of *Dragon's Den* and the 'Olympic Committee'.

It all started in Port Isaac, Cornwall, where Karen grew up. She excelled in athletics but readily admits that she neglected her studies and under-achieved at school, so that she could not pursue her wish to be a PE teacher. So later she went to college and studied economics and accountancy instead, and this was the basis of her business training. But her early experiences help to explain her strong empathy with young under-achievers, and her passion to give them motivation, confidence and a will to succeed. This personal engagement and drive also helps to explain her remarkable success in raising support from industry and business, including major names such as Abbey Life. And Karen's work has been honoured at national level: for her charitable work and her expertise in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among young people, she received the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion in 2009.

Karen's business expertise and her personal gifts have also been recognised through a wide range of directorships, at the Dorset Chamber of Commerce

and Industry, 2CR FM, Consortium for Education Business Links 14-19, and the New Forest Tourism Partnership and former Chair of the Dorset Blind Association and Governor of Weymouth College. She is a current Governor of the Bishop of Winchester Academy. Amazingly, in the midst of this busy life, Karen has also managed to research and write a PhD thesis on educational policy matters, with the title *Rising Entrepreneurship in the classroom*.

BU greatly values its association with Karen and her work, and is proud to support The Enterprise and Skills Company.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Dr Karen Arnold, and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Education, *honoris causa*.