**Our Story So Far – Launch speech by Lord Agnew**

* Thank you *Bishop Stephen* for inviting me to join you at today’s event to launch your first review of the work of the Foundation for Educational Leadership.
* It is always humbling to reflect that the Church of England is involved in over 4,500 non-fee paying schools in this country. I always feel it is important to acknowledge this and thank you for all you do in English education.
* Leadership of schools and of multi-academy trusts is of crucial importance to the continuing improvement of our education system. As the Church of England plays such a key role in the education of so many of our children I am very pleased to have the opportunity to join you today.
* I’m delighted that the Church has not only recognised the crucial importance of leadership, but has made this a serious commitment in establishing this Foundation.
* I’m also pleased to see that this isn’t simply about training leaders for Church of England schools, but is focused on training leaders who share your vision for education.
* The development of academies and MATs has brought many opportunities for schools to work in close and get the benefits of developing staff to grow into leadership roles. But there is a particular challenge in finding and developing people who can move from a role where they have responsibility for running one school, to leading a trust of 10 or even 20 schools.
* The evaluation of your first year shows that participants’ engagement with the Foundation has led to greater confidence in promoting the church’s vision for education. It also shows a willingness to tackle the often difficult decisions any leader has to make.
* You will know that the department’s efforts are increasingly focussed on opportunity areas - ‘cold spots’ where the need to secure better outcomes for disadvantaged children is most acute. I note the church’s work to develop leaders in rural and coastal areas, where helping children to achieve, is particularly challenging.
* This review of the first year offers initial thoughts and seeks to learn lessons that will inform how the Foundation will develop. It’s a great start which bodes well for the church’s role in the future development of leaders in education.
* Professor Joy Carter and her team should be congratulated in exceeding your first year recruitment targets of participation levels on the programmes that you have established.
* I am in the slightly unusual position of having seen the beginnings of many academy initiatives when I was last in the Department. I encouraged several of those that you are now working on, such as closer collaboration amongst primary heads. But then more importantly, I tried to put these into practice in the front line myself. So I know they can work.
* I am sure you will know that the Department has already accredited your Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship as a National Professional Qualification and we will look for other ways to support you in this vital work. We want Schools, MATs and dioceses to be able to fulfil their role as system leaders in their schools across the country.

Thank you