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Dear Professor Blundell

Thank you for your letter of 17 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, about the teaching of evolution in the primary curriculum. Due to the large volume of letters the Secretary of State receives, I have been asked to reply.

Firstly, may I apologise for the delay in responding, this is due to the vast amount of correspondence received by the new Coalition Government.

The Government has decided not to proceed with the new primary curriculum proposed by Sir Jim Rose under the previous Government. The Government believes that such a curriculum would be too prescriptive and bureaucratic and there is a concern that a move away from traditional academic subjects could lead to an erosion of standards in our primary schools.

The Government is committed to reforming the National Curriculum in order to restore it to its intended purpose – a minimum national entitlement organised around subject disciplines. We will announce how we plan to take this forward in due course.

All schools, including faith schools, are required to teach science. The current science programmes of study set out the legal requirements of the science National Curriculum. They focus on the nature of science as a subject discipline, including what constitutes scientific evidence and how this is established. Students learn about scientific theories as established bodies of scientific knowledge with extensive supporting evidence. Creationism and intelligent design are sometimes claimed to be scientific theories.

This is not the case as they have no underpinning scientific principles, or explanations, and are not accepted by the science community as a whole. Creationism and intelligent design therefore do not form part of the science National Curriculum programmes of study and therefore should not be taught as part of science.

Once again thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Val Shiels". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "V".

Val Shiels
Public Communications Unit