

## Distinguished supporters' letter on creationism, 2002

**In March 2002, 43 of the British Humanist Association's eminent scientist supporters and Humanist Philosophers signed and sent the letter below, deploring the teaching of Creationism in schools, to Prime Minister Tony Blair and relevant Government departments.**

The letter was copied to: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills; the Minister for Schools Standards; the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Science; Professor David King, Government Chief Scientific Officer; Sir William Stubbs, Chair, QCA; and Martin Hollins, Principal Officer, Science, QCA.

The Right Hon Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
LONDON SW1A 2AS

26 March 2002

Dear Prime Minister

### **Creationism in British schools**

We are alarmed to learn that creationists are now teaching in at least one state-funded school, Emmanuel College in Gateshead, that the Darwinian evolutionary hypothesis is "a matter of faith" (*TES*, 25/1/02, *Guardian* 9/3/02, Channel 4 News 11/3/02). Creationist science teachers appear to be exploiting the wording of KS4 Science in the National Curriculum, which refers to pupils learning "how scientific controversies can arise from different ways of interpreting empirical evidence [for example Darwin's theory of evolution]". Scientists may disagree about the details and processes of evolution, but they do not disagree about whether it happened, and it is disingenuous of teachers to claim otherwise.

We urgently call for: a tightening up of the legal requirements in National Curriculum Science to prevent creation stories being taught as anything other than religious myths; clear guidance from GCSE examination boards to teachers and pupils that creationism is not a scientific hypothesis; reform of the Science curriculum to enable teaching about Darwinian evolution well before KS4, which may become optional in the future - we suggest teaching it at KS2.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Archard  
Sir Michael Atiyah OM FRS  
Dr Julian Baggini  
Dr Piers Benn  
Professor Simon Blackburn  
Professor Colin Blakemore ScD FMedSci FRS  
Professor Margaret Boden  
Sir Hermann Bondi  
Dr Malcolm Cass  
Peter Cave  
Michael Clark  
John Christie  
Sir Kenneth Clucas  
Dr Helena Cronin  
Professor Richard Dawkins FRS  
Professor Robin Dunbar FRA FBA  
Professor Sir Anthony Epstein

Professor Antony Flew  
Dr Steven French  
Professor John L. Harper CBE FRS  
Dr Alan Haworth  
Professor Robert A Hinde CBE FRS  
Professor Hugh Huxley MBE, ScD, FRS  
Dr Matthew Kiernan  
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Professor Richard Norman  
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Sir Roger Penrose FRS  
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Professor Peter Simons  
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(Signatures available for inspection at BHA office)