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cc DHS

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 June 1988

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 26 May and for your note on the provision of religious education in schools.

Your analysis was most interesting and thought provoking. I will not comment in detail on what you said since I know that you are seeing Kenneth Baker to discuss the matter. But I would not want to see religious education lost from some schools altogether, as your proposals, if I understand them aright, would seem to allow. That would be so unfair for the children involved.

I have asked Kenneth to let me have a report on your discussions with him.

Personally I incline towards the approach that religious education must be based on the Old and New Testament; that is the established Church, that is our history, which values have shaped our ideas and beliefs. I do not think we should be shy about saying so.

Yours ever

Nargant

The Rt. Hon. Lord Thorneycroft, C.H.



ELIZABETH HOUSE
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LONDON SE1 7PH
01-934 9000

N L Wicks Esq
Principal Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

E7 JUN 1988

Dear Nigel

Thank you for your letters of 1 and 2 June concerning Lord Thorneycroft's letter of 26 May to the Prime Minister about religious education. I attach a suggested reply for the Prime Minister to send. As you can see, this would need to issue before my Secretary of State sees Lord Thorneycroft on 8 June.

Yours sincerely

T B Jeffery

T B JEFFERY
Private Secretary

Thank you for your letter of 26 May with which you enclosed a note on religious education, and how you think this might best be provided in schools.

I found your analysis interesting and I am grateful for your contribution to the debate. I don't propose to comment in detail on your proposals, as I know you are seeing Kenneth Baker on 8 June to discuss them. I think I should say however that I would not wish to see religious education lost from some schools altogether, as your proposals would allow. This would be so unfair for the children involved.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of your discussions with Kenneth.



me PAMAAA

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Principal Private Secretary

2 June 1988

Further to my letter of yesterday about Lord Thorneycroft's note on the religious clauses in the Education Bill, you will wish to be aware of the Prime Minister's own comments on his approach.

The Prime Minister does not think the solution proposed in Lord Thorneycroft's paper is either possible or desirable. She believes that it should be within the power of an education authority to ensure that there are sufficient teachers who can teach religious education.

The Prime Minister has made two comments of detail on the note. The first is in relation to point (a) on page 3 which says:

"Wherever possible provision should be made to give them [pupils of whatever ethnic origin] education and encouragement in their own faith be it Muslim, Christian or any other."

The Prime Minister does not dissent from this statement, but believes it important that provision should not be made for "spurious" faiths. Her second comment relates to point (f) on the fourth page of the note. She disagrees with the assertion that in some schools no Christian religious activity and perhaps no religious activity at all will be possible.

I am copying this letter to Nick Gibbons (Lord Privy Seal's Office).

N. L. WICKS

Tom Jeffery, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

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Lord THORNEYCROFT

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

ack/1 June 1988

I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft letter for the Prime Minister's signature to be sent in reply to the attached letter from Lord Thorneycroft about religious education. Please could I have the draft reply by Wednesday 8 June.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Nick Gibbons in the Lord Privy Seal's Office.

(N. L. WICKS)

Tom Jeffery, Esq.,
Department of Education and Science.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Tom Jeffery', written in a cursive style.