



... children, their world, their education

SUMMER BORN CHILDREN: THE FORGOTTEN DISADVANTAGE?

The Cambridge Primary Review welcomes the Institute for Fiscal Studies report, ***Does When You Are Born Matter? The impact of month of birth on children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills in England***. This report highlights a long-standing concern which will be familiar to many teachers, parents and children, not least from the controversy generated by the Rose Review's proposals about school starting age in 2008, but as the Cambridge Primary Review evidence indicates, understanding and responding to the problem requires looking beyond the simple fact of a child's date of birth. The CPR Final Report stressed the need for policymakers and practitioners to work to ensure that gaps in the learning and achievement of many different groups – including summer born children – are significantly reduced, and in 2010 we placed 'narrowing the gaps' and 'consolidating the EYFS' high on our list of post-election policy priorities. The CPR seeks to address these concerns by proposing changes in:

- the structures of schooling, including the age of transition from the early years foundation stage curriculum to key stage one (CPR final report, recommendations 26-29) and later transitions (recommendation 109)
- assessment practices tracking children's progress in learning (CPR recommendations 30, 70)
- teacher education and continuing professional development, giving greater attention to research-based evidence on children's development and learning needs (CPR recommendations 31, 60).

The CPR has also argued that reducing these linked issues to a debate about school starting age tends to miss what is more important: that early years educational provision, whether it takes place in pre-school or school settings, should be developmentally appropriate and should lay solid foundations for the kind of learning required in the formal curriculum that follows. This is something that, historically, has been better understood in many continental European countries than in England.

To find out more about the Review's evidence and recommendations, read the Cambridge Primary Review final report, *Children, Their World, Their Education* (2010):

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415548717/>

For further research evidence on birth-date effects see:

http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/digitalAssets/169664_Cambridge_Lit_Review_Birthdate_d3.pdf

To access the Institute of Fiscal Studies report:

<http://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/5737>