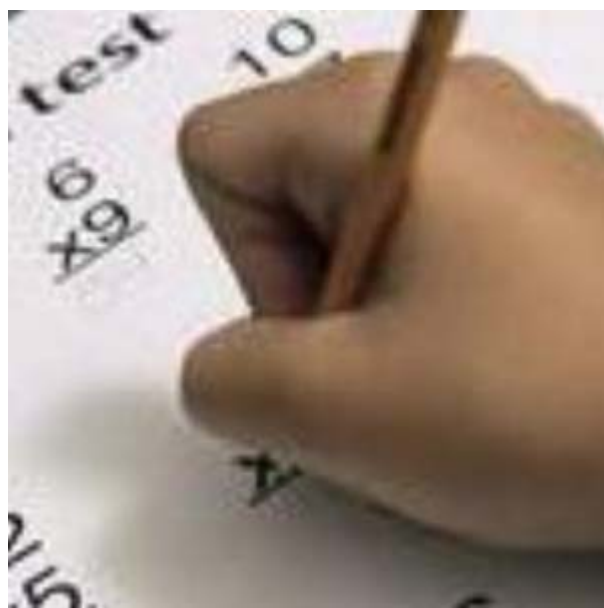


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## Children 'should start school at six'



Children 'should start school at six', review states

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**[By Sarah Garrod](#)**

Children's education should begin at the age of six, a review has said.

The Cambridge Primary Review says children should be able to 'learn through play' until they are a little older, in the same way they learn at nursery.

In England children currently begin school at age four, which the review says there is no evidence to suggest has any learning benefit.

A similar move has already been taken in Wales, and is due to be introduced in Northern Ireland.

Today's review states: "The English insistence on the earliest possible start to formal schooling, against the grain of international evidence and practice, is educationally counterproductive. The Early Years Foundation Stage should be renamed and extended to age six, and early years provision should be strengthened in its quality and staffing so that children are properly prepared – socially, linguistically and experientially – for formal learning.

"The Key Stage 1/2 division should be replaced by a single primary phase, yielding a seamless journey through Foundation (0-6) and Primary (6-11). The feasibility of raising the school starting age in line with these changes should be examined."

Christine Blower, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), told the BBC: "All the evidence shows that proper, in-depth early years education provided by qualified teachers gives the best possible start to children's schooling."

The report stated that in general it was found that primary schools are doing a "good job", saying investment had risen and recent policies had had a positive impact.