



International research and policy on season of birth

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Caroline Sharp

National Foundation for Educational Research



Starting School and Ensuring Smooth Transitions

- **England has one of the earliest compulsory school starting age in Europe**



Age of starting school in Europe

Four	Northern Ireland
Five	England, Malta, Netherlands, Scotland, Wales
Six	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey
Seven	Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden

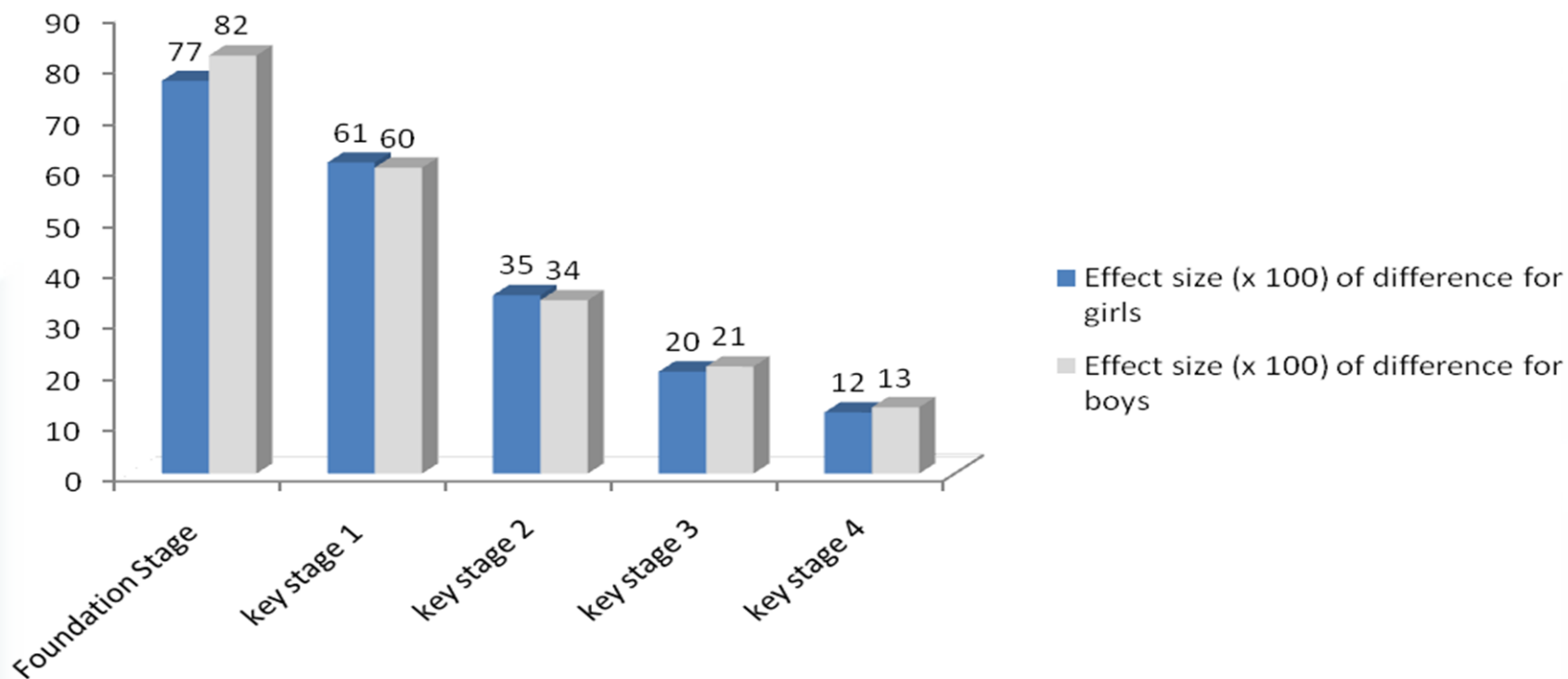


Research findings

- Season of birth effects have been found in: academic performance, special needs, attendance, mental health, sporting selection...
- Season of birth effects are mostly due to age-related performance
- The extent of the difference decreases as children get older



Difference in results: children born in summer and autumn





Recommended strategies

- ✓ Age standardised tests
- ✓ Appropriate curriculum and pedagogy
- ✓ Raise awareness and monitor referrals
- ? Equalise length of schooling
- ? Part-time for summer-borns
- X Deferred entry
- X Repeat a year



Conclusion

The challenge is to ensure that the system minimises inequalities due to relative age.

We need to make schools ready for children, rather than focusing on making children ready for school.



For more information:
www/nfer.ac.uk/research/areas/early_years