



Immigration and Education; response to the IPPR

The [IPPR has recently published a critique](#) of [Migrationwatch's recent report](#) on the likely future impacts that immigration would have on primary and secondary education in the UK.

Their critique does not attempt to challenge our main point – namely that mass immigration of 3 million over the last 12 years is likely to add 0.5 million to the school rolls in the next five years and 1 million in the next ten years. It ignores some significant and authoritative evidence that we used in our report, and makes a number of observations that are unsupported by evidence.

IPPR

"Migrationwatch ignores the fact that migrants make a significant contribution to the public purse – a significant number of taxpayers are migrants".

No. We have not ignored the contribution that migrants make to Government revenues as taxpayers, but we believe that it is less significant than IPPR and others claim it is because their calculations are based on the same 'questionable approach' criticised by the [Economic Affairs Committee of the House of Lords in their 2008 report](#):

This Committee reported:

Determining whether immigrants make a positive or negative fiscal contribution is highly dependent on what costs and benefits are included in the calculations. Government claims that the exchequer consistently benefits from immigration rely on the children of one UK-born parent and one immigrant parent being attributed to the UK-born population – a questionable approach. But even using the Government's preferred method, the fiscal impact is small compared to GDP and cannot be used to justify large-scale immigration.

For a full discussion of this important issue, Chapter 5 of the House of Lords report is worth reading.

In addition, our calculations of the costs of educating children of migrants were based on very conservative assumptions, excluding for example any costs of pre-primary education and the additional costs imposed by the particular challenges entailed in educating migrant children – which are significant, and which were ignored in the studies purporting to demonstrate the fiscal benefits of migration mentioned by the IPPR.

IPPR

"Key groups of migrants who have arrived since 1998 (which is the focus of the Migrationwatch report) have significantly higher employment rates – migrants born in new EU member states, for example, have an employment rate of 82.9 per cent".

IPPR are presumably referring to the employment rate of nationals of the A8 group of countries who began to enter the UK in substantial numbers in 2004. It is true that this large group of migrants has a higher employment rate than UK-born members of the labour force, but 80% are at or near the minimum wage so they pay very little tax.

IPPR

“In claiming that migration will create demand for additional school places, Migrationwatch doesn’t take account of the fact that the number of births to UK-born mothers is generally falling – a significant number of the children born to migrant mothers might be expected to simply fill school places that would otherwise be empty”.

No. Births to UK-born women in England and Wales in 2009 were 6,000 less than in 2008, but they are not ‘generally falling’ as the IPPR claim. In every year but one since 2003 such births have risen – in 2003 they totalled some 506,000 and in 2009 around 532,000.

But, even if there is spare capacity in some primary schools, it is clear from section 4 of our paper that this is not generally in Local Authority areas that have experienced the highest rates of immigration and where demand for places is already significantly greater than capacity – a situation that is projected to become more severe over time.

24 October, 2010