Twitter Thread by Lewis Goodall

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More study aids and generous grade boundaries for 2021's exams will be welcomed by many teachers and students. But doesn't address a fundamental problem of the next exam season: equity. Because there's great variation in how different schools have been affected by self-isolation.

Let's take the most recent attendance stats which I still don't think have really registered.

Most recent data- attendance rate across England of 83%

In secondary schools it's 78% (!)

So more than 1 in 5 secondary pupils are off school, largely for Covid related reasons.

But that's just an average. Some schools' attendance are at levels where they can't really function, or certainly provide the quality of education they normally do.

Teachers' are split between trying to run online lessons and those in schools.

Whole year groups are off.

Some students are in isolation, return to school and within days are in isolation again.

As I've reported before, IT provision is still patchy. Lots of reports of kids not doing work at home either because they get of the swing of it or they don't have the IT resources.

And that's before we get on to staff isolation, which is also proving a nightmare in many places.

In other words, you have to have everything go right for your education not to be impacted by Covid right now. And that's affecting some places more than others.

So question is, is it far for a student in Cornwall say, who has had little to no disruption to their education since September to be given the same dispensations as one in Hull whose school may have been closed for a period?

There is no easy answer to this- Gavin Williamson has said that the the DfE is looking for ways to address the equity issue. But it's a profound challenge. As I've said, I'm not sure it's really registered the extent to which many schools are really, really struggling.

NB bear in mind this is also a cohort who missed months of their education in the first half of 2020. Many are still reporting behavioural issues and teachers tell me some are still far, far behind where we would expect. That's the context they're dealing with.

For example, Beacon Hill Academy in Dudley where Ive been filming today: the whole of Y7 and Y8 are in self isolation and will have been for two weeks. At one point much of the senior staff were off too. Some kids having to have repeated bouts of isolation.

