

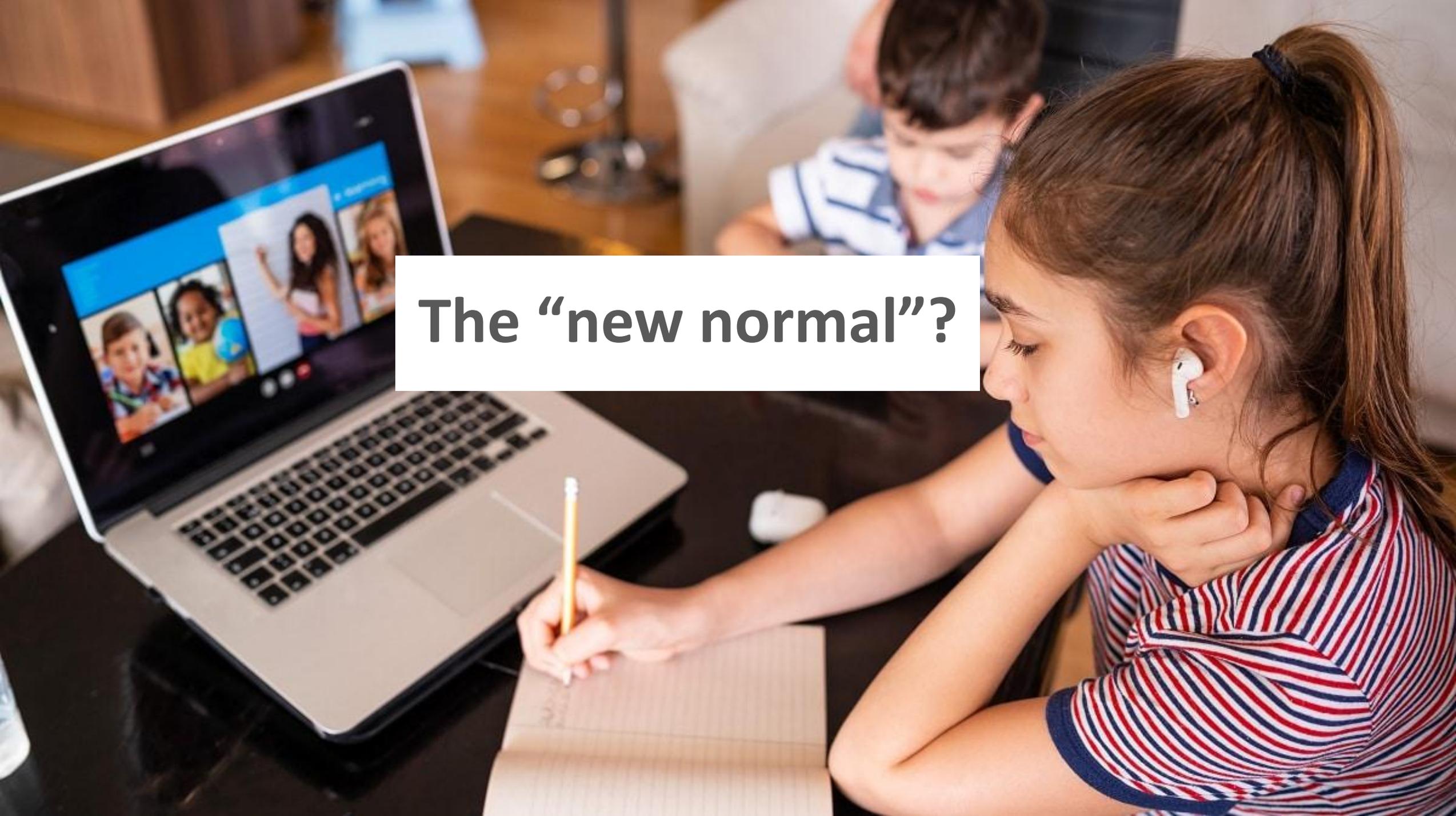
# Mind the Learning Gap! Online Learning During a Pandemic and Its Impact on Migrant Children in the UK

LOCAL DIMENSION OF CHILDREN'S MIGRATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON  
EU INTEGRATION POLICY

International Online Conference

5th December 2020





**The “new normal”?**

# Educational Inequalities and Well-Being

- Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction and inequalities is key in education.
- Inequalities in capital: economic, social and cultural (Crossley, 2008) in relation to the structure of the economic context and its materiality (Moi, 1990; Skeggs, 1997)
- Educational attainment and inequality in the UK
  - Disadvantages for working class families and certain ethnic groups (Pensiero & Schoon, 2019; Stevens et al., 2019).
- Education as determinant of life prospects (Hout & DiPrete, 2006; Machin, 2006) providing equalising opportunities
  - School lockdown disturbs that, developing learning disadvantages and amplifying inequalities.



# School Disruption and Well-Being: Emerging Evidence



- 12 weeks of schooling interruption drops test scores significantly (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020)
  - with further separation by socioeconomic status
- Lockdown has far-reaching educational consequences, especially for vulnerable children (Andrew et al., 2020; Bol, 2020;).
- The Netherlands: Bol (2020) finds lower-educated parents feel unable to help with school work.

# Evidence So Far: Class Gaps?

- Online lessons: 23% of pupils reported to be taking part every day (The Sutton Trust, 2020).
  - Pupils from middle class homes much more likely to do so (30%), compared to working class pupils (16%).
  - At private schools, 51% of primary and 57% of secondary students have accessed online lessons every day.
- Narrowing the 'tuition gap': 2/3 of children who previously received private tuition were reported to no longer receive such support, 1/3 continued to access online.
- Time spent on 'education services' (Andrew et al. 2020) during school closure:
  - the richest primary school children spend, on average, six hours per day on educational activities, and secondary school students spend five and a half hours per day.



# School Lockdown and Effects on Migrant Pupils in the UK

- Interviews with :
  - staff from selected schools
  - City Council Department for Education
  - Case study of Online Book club
- With an aim to explore:
  - Implications of the pandemic
  - Solutions and recommendations for establishing a systematic and holistic inclusion policy for migrant pupils
  - Challenges for child-centred approach



# Who are the Migrant Children in Our Study?

- New international arrivals
- Short term (less than 3 years)
- Long term (5 years)
- Those whose parents are of migrant backgrounds (defined as local)
  - a) Asylum seekers
  - b) Economic migrants
  - c) Front line workers (key)**
  - d) Care workers**
- **Children of some c and d groups did attend schools throughout**



# Governance problems of the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Home and online learning

- Differences and gaps in school integration

## Limited information available

- information in all languages is limited making it difficult for parents to follow updates

## Parents' and families' involvement

- Involvement in educational process made difficult due to lack of time, access to information in their language



# Governance problems of the COVID-19 Pandemic (contd.)

## Limited care structure

- Socio-economic disadvantage, access to devices

## Teachers and schools in times of online schooling

- Further support and training to provide pastoral care required

## Rising incidents of racism

- migrants or asylum seekers were criticised for spreading the virus

# Challenges for Schools

Socio-  
economic  
and  
language-  
related

Transition  
groups and  
International  
New Arrivals

Exams and  
home  
education

# Snapshot of Class, Race and Gender Gaps

## Profile 1:

- Girl, 13, Asylum seeker
- Moved accommodation during lockdown to shared accommodation
- Disruption to school
- Learning gap due to language, and physical space

## Profile 2:

- Boy, 12, mother as care worker
- Father working from home so did not attend school
- Social Isolation (Mother being NHS worker) and Covid tests
- Materials from schools, no online
- More time gaming, screen time



# Back to School Roadmap

- Re-opening of schools under new constraints (small groups, social distancing, isolation phases .
- Impact on type of learning (socialisation within bubbles; limited interactions due to lack of physical events, and class isolation increases learning gap
- Learning gaps, particularly maths
- Reading and literacy classes (including EAL) affected
- Staff absences and impact on pupils, including emotional wellbeing
- Pupil role within schools as diminished due to rules and policies



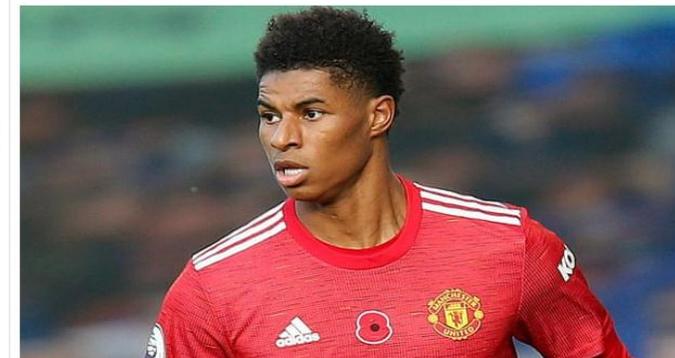
# Best Practices to Support Vulnerable Groups During the Pandemic: Social and Cultural Capital

## Online book clubs for children of migrant backgrounds

- Children of key (care) workers
- Parental time and role of community network (voluntary)
- Risks of screen time (gaming)
- Book Reviews- Friday meets (you tube)
- Motivational talks (UNICEF/creative writing)
- Debate club after school start

Marcus Rashford launches book club so every child can experience 'escapism'

- Player promoting reading and literacy among children
- Follows his work to highlight issue of child food poverty



▲ Marcus Rashford has twice forced the government into a change of heart over free school meals. Photograph: Magi Haroun/Rex/Shutterstock

Marcus Rashford is launching a book club and his own range of literature with the aim of giving children from lower socio-economic backgrounds the opportunity to embrace reading from an early age.

The Manchester United and England footballer is working with Macmillan Children's Books (MCB) to promote reading and literacy among children from all backgrounds, and he talked about his own lack of access to books as a child.

# Implications for employing the Child-centered approach

- Pandemic and associated restrictions pose challenges for employing the child-centered approach in educational and research contexts
- Eg representation of social groups (class, migrant status, gender, and year groups)
- Role of the pupil (child advisory board)
- Digital means of research and teaching
- Need for more research

# Questions?

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