Bernadette Clinton (British Council Ambassador and MFL Consultant): Can we really Produce Spontaneous Language Users, Able to Manipulate Complex Language, Starting from KS3?

Bernadette shared the success of the Hackney Learning Trust (HLT) in developing language learners and confident and competent staff across 58 primary schools and 14 secondary schools. She outlined the support mechanisms and training available for staff within the HLT.

She stated that the new GCSE demands that each key stage builds upon the language of the previous key stage hence why the HLT has developed a clear strategy across primary and secondary schools. Each key stage is critical and provides a foundation for the next so KS2 plays a significant role in GCSE and MFL teachers are aware of this.

Collated from examiners reports, Bernadette was clear that the following are critical, and this is where KS2 languages should focus in order to build a strong foundation:
- Pronunciation, intonation and fluency
  Phonics is key to lose anglicised vowels and develop confidence of specific consonants and sounds.
- Common questions can be practiced and learned well (how, what, when, where, who and why)
- The weather
- Key vocabulary such as places in town and adjectives

Bernadette went in to detail outlining how year 3 to year 6 students' language lessons focus on key aspects from speaking and repetition of words and short simple phrases through to using simple phrases and sentences independently to describe people, places, things and actions; all with good pronunciation.

This is clearly communicated with secondary schools and there are meetings to develop schemes of learning in KS2 and KS3 to further develop, enrich and progress not to repeat content. Relationships amongst colleagues are stronger and transition is significantly better as a result, plus students do love learning languages. Tracked data collated in KS2 is shared with KS3 colleagues providing key evidence of progress giving a much clearer picture of each student and how best to support them.