

# PSQM and SATC: A symbiotic relationship.

**A simple and quick compare and contrast of PSQM and SATC, two organisations active in Stoke-on-Trent, shows that they both have a four letter acronym! They both focus on primary science; they both develop communities of practice; and they both demonstrate fully the DfE standard for effective CPD.**



**Tina Whittaker  
PSQM Senior  
Regional Hub Leader  
and Co-Lead SATC.**

1. Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
  2. Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
  3. Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.
  4. Professional development programmes should be sustained over time.
- And all this is underpinned by, and requires that:
5. Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership.

**Figure 1 - The DfE Standard for Teachers' Professional Development**

Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) is a National formal accreditation process through which a school submission of evidence of impact is formally reviewed and validated by an external body. A school is supported over a year to use a PSQM framework from which to audit priorities, identify CPD needs, then create and implement an action plan. Science Across the City (SATC) is different because it is a localised and contextualised programme of professional learning to upskill the workforce in Stoke-on-Trent. Schools buy into PSQM with a joining fee while SATC has been very

fortunate to be an Opportunity Area funded service for state schools.

These two organisations stand alone, independent of each other and one can exist without the other. The significant similarities that both SATC and PSQM share is the overarching goal of school improvement through enhanced systems leadership and the commitment to developing quality science experiences for all children.

So why would a school choose to engage with both? Why is this not simply twice the work and double the trouble? Is a symbiotic relationship possible in design and in practice? What is the benefit or win-win for a school accessing both PSQM and SATC simultaneously?

Together at strategic design stage, the SATC team asserted the potential impact of bringing nationally recognised CPD offers to the local area, to increase access, raise profile and stimulate teacher talk around primary science best practice. The bid for funding included a clear plan for evaluation of success and that the evidence impact would not increase teacher workload as it would come from each school's PSQM submission.

PSQM	SATC	
School to Engage in PSQM • Audit • Action planning • Implement action plan • Submission of evidence	Offers of CPD intervention provided by SATC, Select either column 1 or column 2 according to school need (possibly identified during the PSQM audit)	
	Implement Thinking Doing Talking Science (TDTS)	Implement Teacher Assessment in primary Science (TAPS)
	Reflect upon the impact of the intervention through pupil voice, teacher voice, headteacher voice, pupil work samples, sample teacher planning, inspection data etc	
Submit evidence for external review. School receives individual recognition - A Primary Science Quality Mark and Funders receive validated outcome		

**Table: Exemplification of SATC model (Year 1)**

### Combined impact for subject leaders

While SATC provides the knowledge for science subject leaders to develop science teaching and learning, the commitment of the whole school community working to gain a PSQM enables science subject leaders to have their voices heard more loudly in school and provides a strong message that changes are necessary.



#### Presenting an analogy - The Fish and Chip Shop!

To source the fish for the fryer there needs to be a net as a tool for the catch and a plentiful supply of quality fish that is desirable to hungry customers. Not having a net makes the process longer and harder

but not impossible. Having a few fish across a large expanse of water makes the process longer and harder but not impossible.

Can it be suggested that the PSQM framework is the fishing net (or tool) and that SATC ensures there are plenty of the right type of fish to catch in the now owned school net?

Without PSQM schools might be tempted by the pickled eggs or battered Mars bars. There is the risk of a scenario where funding for lots of CPD is available without clarity on what are appropriate choices from the menu.

Without SATC more schools might need to look harder and further to access evidence-based interventions. There is a possibility of over reliance on local networks, with interpretations (and possible misinterpretations) of information from secondary sources. Returning to the analogy, without SATC you might just nip to the chip shop for an easy solution but not necessarily the healthiest one. In summary because of the co-existence of SATC and PSQM there are readily available nutritious solutions to meet known dietary requirements.

### Legacy benefits

The PSQM Outreach kite-mark defines a school that is able and keen to support other schools. There are currently three outreach schools in Stoke-on-Trent and another four in progress, representing 9% of the city schools by September 2022. These schools can be readily identified and empowered to contribute to a city-wide cross organisation infrastructure. The SATC goal of capacity building has been realised through the PSQM Outreach certificate.

But other PSQM certification is available in the form of either PSQM or PSQM Gilt. Since the start of SATC 41% of city schools have achieved PSQM recognition\*, a further seventeen schools are either awaiting their submission review or expect to submit in June 2022. These schools have formal recognition of the on-going importance of science to their community and its important strategic value.

#### In summary

The symbiotic benefit for schools of combined engagement with PSQM and SATC is more focussed leadership, giving the science subject leaders authority and agency to enact change through increased engagement in the STEM landscape of resources and opportunities.

The symbiotic benefit for the PSQM and SATC teams is the existence of a geographical hot spot of engagement, raising and increasing the value and importance of science as a core subject. Indeed, in Stoke-on-Trent, success is leading to further success with demand for science CPD increasing as the impact is evident.



\* Nationally 5.1% of all primary schools achieved PSQM schools in a similar timeframe to the SATC reference above.