



### **PolyMAT is consulting on making a significant change**

1. PolyMAT is consulting on the construction of a new 6 classroom building
2. PolyMAT is consulting on making a change to its Sixth Form Published Admission Number (PAN)

#### **Introduction**

It is the intention of PolyMAT to expand its sixth form facilities to be completed by September 2024 when Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls (WPSfG) will see the graduation of its first Year 11 cohort. PolyMAT's Sixth Form Provision is located on the site of Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys (WPSfB) and is co-educational. It is a long-standing and increasingly popular and successful provision which typically sees nearly half of the Year 11 cohort from WPSfB remain with us. In order to provide equality of provision for boys and girls, there is a need to increase our physical capacity from September 2024. Our two schools are situated next door to each other and we want to ensure that students can remain local for their Sixth Form education. PolyMAT has taken great care to make financial savings to contribute towards the capital costs of this expansion.

#### **Rationale and links to our Vision**

PolyMAT opened an eight form entry girls' secondary school in September 2019, the sister school to the already established boys' school. The two schools share playing fields and are situated in close proximity to each other. The schools share core values including the ethos, culture and an outstanding pastoral system. Both schools share the same catchment area which means that the levels of EAL, FSM, SEN and prior attainment are similar. We believe it is a natural progression for a substantial number of students

from both schools to stay with PolyMAT for key stage 5 and remain in the environment within which they are familiar and have been successful. Our students are provided with a rigorous, academic curriculum from the outset at key stage 3. This prepares them for success at university and beyond, within a wide range of careers. A large number of our students secure places at Russell Group universities including Cambridge.

We believe that our Vision is central to our need to expand our provision as it is based on our commitment to inclusion and therefore the need to accommodate the same number of Sixth Form places for girls as we do for boys. Our vision and values are as follows:

### Our Vision

Our vision is “Success for Everyone”. We aspire for every member of our community, regardless of circumstances or background, to be the best version of themselves - confident, successful students, committed, successful staff, who are committed to growing and developing as practitioners, and engaged stakeholders who unite in celebration.

### Our Values

Our two core values are CARE and UNITY.

CARE. The overriding feel within our Trust is that we care more than anyone else could expect. We care for all aspects of our practice and, in particular, we care for:

Everyone’s safety and happiness

- Everyone’s personal development and growth
- Everyone’s outcomes
- Everyone’s standards
- Everyone’s learning
- Everyone’s well-being

- Everyone's relationships

This is reflected by the fact that we call ourselves the Poly Family and we are an organisation based on relationships above all else – we are individual people first and students, staff and parents second.

UNITY. The value that ensures that our impact is greater than it ever could be if we worked alone. This means that our schools, teams and individuals are always pulled together in ways which share the workload and create solutions from which everyone benefits. We are determined that nothing can divide us when we put the needs of our community before everything else.

Our Vision drives our moral obligation to provide equal access to our sixth form provision for both boys and girls from our two schools. Based on the historic position from WPSfB, we expect similar numbers of internal applicants for Year 12 from WPSfG. This necessitates an increase in our provision to provide the capacity to deliver equal opportunities to both our girls and boys.

### **Fulfilling local need**

Both WPSfB and WPSfG are 8 Form-Entry schools with 240 students in each year group. Both schools have proved similarly popular over the past 3 years since WPSfG opened. Our intention upon opening was to ensure fair access to high-quality education in Thamesmead for both boys and girls. We have achieved this aim. We want to extend this fairness to the Sixth Form provision so that girls in Thamesmead are not disadvantaged compared to boys. Our projected numbers suggest that at least as many girls as boys will want to transition to our Sixth Form provision from September 2024. In order to provide for this, we will need to increase the physical capacity by six classrooms and increase our PAN in the Sixth Form to accommodate an extra 112 students from September 2024 followed by a similar number the following year.

The local need for extra capacity will come entirely from the graduation of girls from WPSfG after Year 11 and will ensure that these students can remain at their 'home' school as we know that progress is helped by maintaining consistency of environment and teaching. This will also minimise travel and transport in the area by ensuring that the students do not have to travel out of Thamesmead or out of the Borough.

PolyMAT recently commissioned a school capacity report for WPSfB. The results of this report showed that there are already shortcomings in the number of classrooms and this will be significantly impacted by the predicted additional numbers from September 2024.

### **Project Proposal**

We propose a new building to accommodate up to six classrooms on the site of WPSfB. The building is planned to 'infill' a section of our existing Sixth Form block which will minimise the loss of space. This will also present virtually no change to the external views of the school.

The building will provide state-of-the-art classrooms which will enable high-quality teaching to be delivered to our expanded Sixth Form cohort. The building externals will be such as to improve the overall appearance of the existing block.

Additional capacity within the Sixth Form block will maximise flexibility for timetabling and curriculum use across the site. This will also serve to reduce pressure on the existing classrooms within the school.

No conversion works are required within existing school buildings minimising cost risks and maintaining a clear differentiation between Expansion and Condition funding programmes.

Based on Building Bulletin 103 (BB103) minimum area guidelines, the provision of 6 classrooms at 55m<sup>2</sup> each would generate additional capacity of up to 180 places. This will generate sufficient capacity as some students will be subsumed into classes within our current capacity. This proposed development has been developed in line with the school's Asset Management Plan.

We will be updating our school travel plans for both students and staff to manage the increased numbers and will continue to have staggered end times for WPSfG and WPSfB in order to ease transport demand at the end of the school days. We will continue to have staff on duty in and around Thamesmead Town Centre to support student travel and manage group sizes on buses.

The proposed build will see PolyMAT increase its Sixth Form capacity from c. 374 students to c.600 students over the two years from September 2024 – 2025.

## **Summary**

This Significant Change will;

- Provide equal opportunity for Sixth Form study for students from both WPSfB and WPSfG
- Improve the teaching environment at WPSfB and the physical environment in general
- Ensure that PolyMAT continues its position as an equitable and high-quality provider of Sixth Form education
- Ensure that Thamesmead has adequate local provision of Sixth Form study for both boys and girls

The Trust has worked tirelessly over the last two years to review its Governance structure and ensure that the Trustees are working strategically, with the appropriate skills set, including estates management, to ensure delivery of this ambitious project to the deadline. The Trust will be supported by Barker Associates, one of the leading education property consultants in the UK. The team are dedicated to designing and creating inspiring, sustainable spaces in the education sector.

We feel strongly that this significant change will give the Trust the capacity to continue to change the life chances to our students and allow them to reach their aspirations.

## **Consultation period**

We welcome all views on our proposed change.

Public Consultations will take place on the following date and time at Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys

Wednesday, 11 May, 4pm - 6pm

Your comments are welcome, if you wish to do so, please ensure these are received by the end of the consultation period, which ends on Wednesday, 18 May 2022.

When responding to this consultation it would be helpful if you could describe your association with either of our schools.

Comments should be directed to the following:-

Email to: [arendell@polymat.co.uk](mailto:arendell@polymat.co.uk)

Or by post to;

Alexa Rendell  
PolyMAT  
Hutchins Road  
Thamesmead  
SE28 8AT