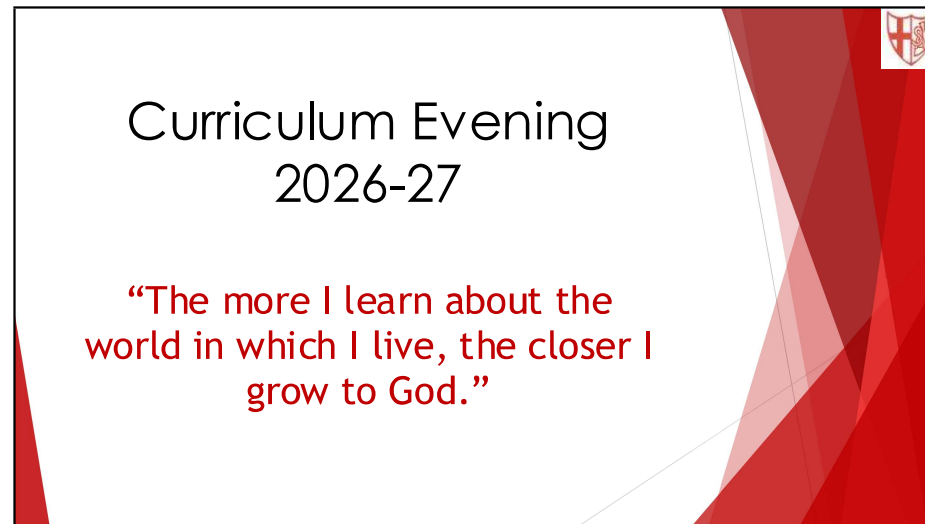




Good evening everyone, and thank you for coming.

I wanted to start this afternoon by sharing a little about what matters to us at St Albert the Great and some of our priorities for the year ahead.



At the heart of St Albert the Great are our three values: dignity, compassion and perseverance.

I want these to be much more than three words that children can repeat. We want children increasingly to understand what they mean and to see them in the way we live together as a school.

Dignity is about recognising the value of every person. Compassion is about noticing and caring for others. And perseverance is about learning to keep going when something is difficult.

They are rooted in our Catholic faith, but they are also very practical. We should see them in the way children learn, play, speak to one another and respond when things do not go quite as they hoped.



Alongside those values, one of the things you will see us being very clear about this year is high expectations.

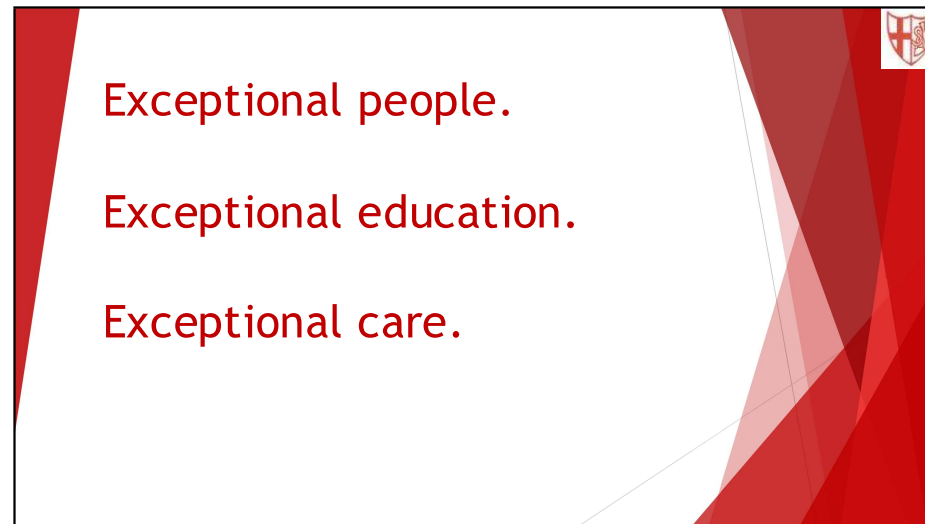
We want children ready to learn. We expect them to be respectful to adults and to one another. We want them to take pride in their work, their presentation and their school.

Some of those things can sound quite small — the way we move around school, listening when someone else is speaking, taking care over a piece of work, wearing our uniform well — but I think the small things matter.

When expectations are clear and consistent, children know where they stand and classrooms become calmer, happier places in which to learn.

And, of course, high expectations do not mean treating every child identically. Some children need additional support or adaptations to be successful. We can have high expectations and provide exceptional care.





When we talked as a leadership team in the summer term about the kind of schools we are trying to build, we came back to these three things: exceptional people, exceptional education and exceptional care.

This is the standard we are aiming towards.

We want adults and children who care, who keep learning and who want the best for each other.

We want every child to receive an excellent education.

And we want children to be known, safe, supported and to feel that they belong.

I think those three things together capture quite well what we want St Albert the Great to become increasingly known for.



One important change this year is that Natalie Johnson has joined St Albert's as our Executive Deputy Headteacher across both schools.

A really significant part of Natalie's role is to work alongside teachers and subject leaders on teaching, curriculum and professional development.

That gives us much greater capacity to focus properly on the quality of education children receive in classrooms each day.

Over the course of this year, you will see us continuing to strengthen teaching and the curriculum and, particularly, making sure that good practice is increasingly consistent across the school.

There are lots of things that schools can spend their time on, but ultimately the quality of teaching children receive every day has to sit right at the centre of our work.



There are also things we should celebrate.

Over the last year, our Early Years team has been working towards the Early Years Quality Mark, and I am delighted that we have successfully achieved Year 1.

That recognises the work being done to develop provision for our youngest children and gives us a clear framework for continuing to improve.

It is a really positive achievement for the team and something that we now want to build on.



The final thing I wanted to say before handing over to the teachers is about working together.

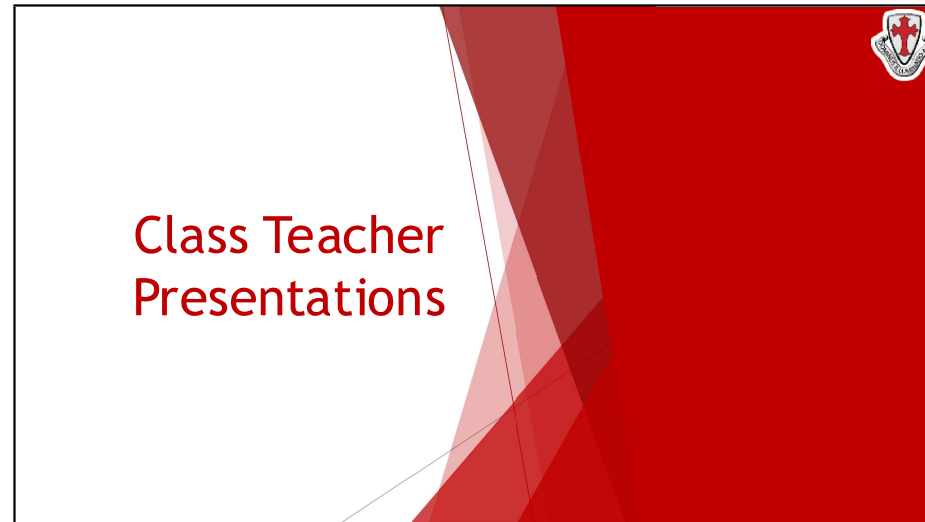
You know your children extraordinarily well, and we have the privilege of spending a significant part of their week with them. Children are best served when those two things work together.

Please talk to us when something is worrying you. Usually, the class teacher is the best place to begin and most things can be resolved very quickly through a conversation.

Equally, when we contact you about learning, attendance, behaviour or something that we think your child needs support with, we need to be able to have those conversations openly too.

We will not always get everything right, and neither will children. What matters is that there is trust between home and school and that the adults around a child are working in the same direction.





And that brings me to the important part of tonight.

Your child's teacher will talk you through what the year looks like for their class: the curriculum, some of the routines and expectations, and the practical things you can do at home that will make the biggest difference.



Finally, thank you for coming this evening and, more importantly, thank you for the trust you place in us with your children.

I'll hand over to the teachers.