

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND HOW TO HANDLE THEM

Andy Taylor shares his expert advice on how to handle common interview questions.

Question	Suggestions
How do you reflect on practice and engage with up-to-date work in your subject/ professional development?	By looking online, general reading but also don't underplay comms with your team, team leader and subject meetings.
	I would talk about connections on Twitter or Facebook groups. Using professional body websites such as the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics and the Association for Physical Education, for example. Wider reading can include TES, books and journal publications. Make sure you have engaged just in case they push you on a point.

Question	Suggestions
How would a child know they are safe in your class?	<p>This could be a safeguarding question or a behaviour management/ethos question. I would want to mention being approachable so that if children have concerns they can speak to you, also the processes of rules, behaviour expectations and the systems you might use.</p> <p>Visit here for more info on keeping children safe in education.</p>

Question	Suggestions
How would you handle a dispute about your teaching with your experienced teaching assistant (TA)?	Sit down together in a safe space for both people and discuss what needs to be done from each party in order to continue working effectively together. If it got to a point where this cannot happen, perhaps to go a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for support.
	Stay polite, consider their opinions but politely and firmly tell them that each teacher has their own way of doing things and this is the way you will be doing it. I wouldn't be afraid to discuss with the SLT as it may give insight into the TA's situation.
	Listen, explain why you chose that style, thank them and acknowledge you should have explained how you were approaching the lesson and will discuss next time as you appreciate what they say.

Question	Suggestions
What three words would your last class use to describe you as a teacher?	This is really personal, but I would word as, <i>"I would hope that they would say I was... because... "</i> .

Question	Suggestions
How do you use your knowledge and understanding of approaches to assessment in order to promote effective teaching and student progress?	If you're in a Key Stage year group, I'd talk about teacher assessment frameworks and using assessment at the end of sessions/units to ensure children's secure grasp of objectives being taught. On a day-to-day basis it would be Assessment for Learning (AFL) to adapt teaching as you go.

Question	Suggestions
If you disagreed with a decision made by a member of SLT, what would you do?	I'd like to think I'd be able to discuss the decision with the SLT just for clarification for myself but ultimately I would respect and abide by their decision as they are SLT.
	I'd check my understanding of said decision first and ask what that looks like by SLT. You might both be thinking the same thing, but it's communicated differently to how you would have worded it. Also, sometimes try it before you draw an opinion.
	I would say, <i>"In the interest of working collaboratively in the schools' best interest, I would seek clarification so that all members of staff are singing from the same hymn sheet – so to speak."</i>

Question	Suggestions
How would you support children in a smooth transition into the school?	Consistency and routines (especially Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)) is a first thought. My children feel safe knowing what is coming up next.
	Communication is key. Making sure you are in contact with home and making sure they can contact you if there are any issues.
	You could talk about liaising with previous settings, settling in sessions for children, initial meetings with parents, consistency on routines, producing information booklets for children over the summer.

Question	Suggestions
<p>How do you develop and maintain good relationships with parents? And how would you deal with a parent that had an issue with the way you had dealt with their child?</p>	<p>The school will be looking for you to talk about being open with communication, ensuring parents are kept informed, and when dealing with the parent, remaining calm, seeking a private space if necessary, making sure you can give them the proper time needed.</p>
	<p>Sharing successes as well as details of behaviour, being visible before and after school, listening and understanding when a parent has a concern, offering support and advice where needed, working together to ensure the best outcomes for their children.</p>
	<p>Remind the parents that you are there to help and when both you and the parents are on the same page progress can be made. Consistent communication is important all the time – not just when things go wrong.</p>

Question	Suggestions
<p>What does an outstanding lesson look like?</p>	<p>Some schools want you to label features, Learning Outcomes (LOs), success criteria, feedback, questioning. Others may want the vibe and ethos of the learning, engagement, progress.</p>
	<p>Students know the LO and they show progress both during and at the end of the lesson which shows they've understood the main LO. Tasks that engage students of all abilities resulting in student-led learning rather than teacher-led. Variety of AfL other than just questioning, which would show how much of a lesson students have understood. Addressing misconceptions as they arise rather than ignoring them.</p>
	<p>I would priorities the development of skill and knowledge from the point they entered to the time they leave. How do you know what they know? What have you done about it?</p>
	<p>I really believe that an outstanding lesson should simply allow the children to think more about something whilst exploring it through discussion, interactions, asking questions! Learning should be an interactive process where the teacher adapts to how the children respond.</p>

Question	Suggestions
<p>If we didn't give you the job, what would we be missing out on?</p>	<p>This question is the chance to share your USP. What can you offer as an individual above everyone else? Often a chance to show some personality too!</p>
	<p>Someone who's passionate about children achieving their potential. Someone who cares about children and their wellbeing – oh yeah... and I bake and supply the staff room with baked treats and goodies!</p>

Question	Suggestions
A child in your class screws up their worksheet and throws it on the floor at the start of the lesson. How do you respond to this?	Speak to them quietly and ask them why they have done this, to understand the reason for their behaviour. Then take it from there. Does the child have any additional learning needs? Have they made mistakes and overreacted? Are they trying to make a point? Are they just being disruptive?
	Tell students to follow instructions on the worksheet. Go to the student and quietly ask, " <i>What's been happening up to now to create this reaction?</i> ". They know the sanctions will come, but deal with the emotions first.
	This question could have safeguarding links – knowing the child, is it out of character?

Question	Suggestions
Where do you see yourself in relation to the learning of the children in your class, in front of them, beside them, or behind them?	All three at different times. In front to guide, beside to support and then behind when they are ready to take the lead and demonstrate what they have learnt – but always ready to catch them if needed.
	I'd say all three at different times – sometimes children bring prior knowledge or a different way of looking at things, you as the educator go in with your knowledge and you work together to bring the combined knowledge together.
	All three! We go on a learning journey together, so beside. You need to be one-step ahead of them in order to stretch them to their full potential, so in front. And you need to know when to let them take the lead and be independent in their learning, so also behind.

Question	Suggestions
How do you ensure British values are demonstrated in your classroom?	By promoting values of teamwork, respect for others, tolerance of differences, etc. in every day interactions and giving examples in the curriculum, where relevant.
	Respect for each other, tolerance and democracy underpins this. Show this with reference to a wide range of sources, class votes, organised debates and adherence to policies such as equality and SEND code of practice.

Question	Suggestions
Tell us about the best lesson you have taught. How do you know it was good? What did you do that made it successful?	Give a real example, talk through what you planned and what you actually did in the lesson. Use the STAR method – Situation, Task, Action and Result – to explain why it was a good lesson e.g. how do you know the students achieved what you wanted them to?

Question	Suggestions
<p>A child asks if they can tell you a secret. What do you do?</p>	<p>Tell them that they can, of course, tell you a secret but if you believe it to be detrimental to their welfare/wellbeing you will have to share it with another adult.</p>
	<p>They can tell you anything but you can't promise to keep it a secret. Make sure you're in an open space. If they don't say anything it still needs to be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If they do, make a note of what they say and pass it on to the DSL.</p>
	<p><i>"Of course, but I might have to tell someone else your secret to make sure you and (relevant people) are safe".</i> Go into more depth and explain that if the child declines to share their secret, this needs reporting to DSL/ Safeguarding.</p>

Question	Suggestions
<p>If I were to come into your classroom during a lesson four weeks into your NQT year, what would I see?</p>	<p>Talk about the level of challenge within the lesson, students engaging with the tasks and class discussions, rewards/praise for those who deserve them but also the successful management of disruptive behaviour.</p>
	<p>A happy, positive and stimulating environment with pupils taking ownership of their work, working towards their goals. A lesson where pupils have enjoyed their learning, having been challenged effectively and leave the room looking forward to their next lesson!</p>

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