



Special School Advisor

Grade VII / Ref 24.26



Closing Date:

Wednesday, 2nd September 2026 at 12 noon

Interviews will be held the week beginning 14th September 2026

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is an equal opportunities employer.

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) is committed to attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining the highest caliber of staff to build a diversified, supportive, innovative and inclusive workforce reflective of the wider community. Our aim is to attract the best people who have the experience, knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies to support ETBI's mission. ETBI supports equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion and encourages underrepresented groups to make applications and accommodates candidates with disability to apply for posts.

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Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

Overview of main functions carried out by Education and Training Boards Ireland

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) are the national representative body established to collectively represent the sixteen Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and promote their interests, which is recognised by the Minister for the purposes of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. ETBI comprises of the staff of ETBI, the ETBI Chief Executives, Directors of Further Education and Training, Directors of Schools, Directors of Organisation, Support and Development Forums and the respective networks and groups associated with these forums.

Mission

ETBI'S mission is to lead and advance the continued development of education, training, and youth work in Ireland.

Vision

To harness our strength to influence and promote a strong education and training sector through collaboration and collective effort.

Values

ETBI's five core values represent the core values of the ETB sector working collectively. Core values are like "branding" but on the inside. They help ETBI to make informed decisions and unify the culture. This will help ETBI hold ourselves accountable and others accountable in decision-making and our engagement with partners and other stakeholders.

The five core values are **Excellence, Care, Equality, Community and Respect**.

- **Excellence** includes excellence in education, training, and support. It is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community, and equality. Excellence encompasses outcomes, experiences, and expectations of the people involved.
- **Care** is about the welfare, well-being, and safety of all who are involved in education and training. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.
- **Equality** is about treating everyone equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity of those involved in education, training, and youth work. It is exemplified by targeting resources for those who have the need and prioritising a culture of inclusion.
- **Community** encompasses learners, their families, staff, and the local communities in which our services are based. It is about having a shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication among all stakeholders.
- **Respect** is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of all those involved in education, training, and youth work. It is exemplified in relationships between all stakeholders, and decision-making that positively impacts on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

At ETBI, we believe that diversity and inclusion are essential to the success of our goals and exist at the core of our values. *Diversity not only includes ethnicity and gender identity but also age, disability status, sexual orientation, religion and many other parts of one's identity.* We are committed to cultivating a workplace of individual differences which embraces unique perspectives and fosters a culture of belonging. Our team is strengthened by a growing diverse workforce, and we actively seek individuals representing various backgrounds, experiences, and ideas to join us in our mission. At ETBI, diversity and inclusion are everyone's responsibility and are the foundations of our collective growth and prosperity.

Role Description:

The Special Schools Advisor, reporting to the Director of Schools and working as part of the wider ETBI Schools Directorate team, will provide specialist advice, practical support and national coordination for ETBs in respect of Community Special Schools. The postholder will support the development of consistent practice, strengthen leadership capacity across the Community Special School sector, and advise ETBs on operational, governance, staffing, planning and policy matters specific to special school provision. This will be a one-year fixed-term post at ETB Grade VII level. There may be an opportunity to extend the contract if funding is approved by the sector. This post is not eligible for secondment.

Responsibilities:

The Special Schools Advisor will contribute to the sustainable and coherent development of the ETB Community Special School sector. The role will provide national-level specialist support to ETBI, ETBs and Community Special School leaders at a time of significant expansion and increasing complexity in special school provision.

- Provide specialist advice and support to ETBI, ETB Chief Executives, Directors of Schools and relevant ETB personnel on matters relating to Community Special Schools.
- Support Community Special School principals and leadership teams through Communities of Practice, professional learning, guidance, mentoring and structured peer engagement.
- Provide intensive supports to Community Special Schools, in conjunction with the relevant ETB, where serious or complex issues arise, including matters relating to governance, school leadership, staffing, health and safety, stakeholder engagement or operational stability.
- Support ETBs in the establishment, transfer, reconfiguration and expansion of Community Special Schools, including the development of practical guidance and shared approaches.
- Contribute to policy development and interpretation by identifying emerging issues, advising on sectoral implications and supporting consistent implementation across ETBs.
- Represent ETBI, as required, in engagements with the Department of Education and Youth, the National Council for Special Education, the Inspectorate and other relevant national stakeholders.
- Identify risks, trends and emerging pressures across the Community Special School sector and advise ETBI and ETBs on appropriate responses.
- Prepare briefing materials, guidance notes, reports and updates to support decision-making by ETBI, ETBs and relevant national forums.

Essential Requirements:

The successful candidate will:

1. Have significant senior leadership experience in a special school context, ideally including experience as a principal or deputy principal of a special school.
2. Demonstrate a strong understanding of the governance, operational and educational requirements of special schools.
3. Have the ability to work collaboratively with ETBI, ETBs, school leaders and national stakeholders in a complex and evolving policy environment.
4. Appointment to this role is subject to satisfactory Garda vetting clearance.

Desirable Professional Knowledge and Experience

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- Experience of supporting school leaders in managing complex operational, governance, staffing or stakeholder issues.
- Experience of working with, or alongside, ETBs, the Department of Education and Youth, the National Council for Special Education, the Inspectorate or other relevant national bodies.
- Experience of leading professional networks, Communities of Practice, mentoring arrangements or sectoral support structures.
- Experience of policy development, guidance preparation, school establishment, transfer, reconfiguration or change management in an education setting.

NOTE:

Qualifications/eligibility may not be verified by ETBI until the final stage of the process. Therefore, those candidates who do not possess the eligibility requirements, and proceed with their application, are putting themselves to unnecessary effort/expense and will not be offered a position from this campaign. An invitation to tests, interview or any element of the selection process is not acceptance of eligibility.

Competencies Required:

The Special School Advisor will be required to show evidence of the following competencies:

Leadership

Inspiring and energising others to achieve personal and organisational success.

- Creates team spirit and helps direct individuals towards the achievement of the team and organisational goals.
- Remains visible, available and approachable to others
- Provides a clear definition of individual and team member roles and responsibilities.
- Explains what needs to be done and why.
- Allows the team to take the glory.
- Regularly finds ways to celebrate and reward successes with the team.
- Takes a stand on issues he/she feels strongly about but supports a decision once it is made.
- Accepts accountability for own actions and maintains a positive outlook.
- Conveys a positive outlook even during periods of stress or change.
- Accepts responsibility and holds themselves accountable for getting things done.

- Quickly adapts to changing priorities/decisions, demonstrating support for the team and organisational goals.

Developing Self and Others

Finding ways to keep skills current and maintain up-to-date knowledge of specific and broad-range topics; providing developmental opportunities to others and taking ownership of own learning and others.

- Promotes information sharing within the team and encourages learning as integral to the team's daily activities.
- Provides time for the team to share information from a variety of sources, demonstrating that learning is integral to work.
- Surrenders interesting jobs to others to help broaden and strengthen their capabilities.
- Exchanges information with a wide range of contacts to keep abreast of new ideas, technology etc.
- Take responsibility for their own learning.
- Listens to feedback and makes appropriate changes.
- Finds expedient ways to develop new skills in the absence of formal training
- Shows a genuine interest and time commitment to developing their own skills and knowledge.
- Admits to, takes responsibility for, and learns from their own mistakes.

Innovation & Creative Thinking

Generating and implementing creative solutions to achieve ETBI Strategic goals, conceptualising and articulating future opportunities and trends.

- Assists the team in the development of new ideas and ways to work.
- Considers how new ideas/trends may affect the team.
- Shares new ideas/trends with the team, asking how those trends could be turned into opportunities for the team.
- Engages others in "what if" thinking to encourage them to find new and better ways of working.
- Provides time for brainstorming and the sharing of ideas.
- Stays informed and find more effective ways of working.
- Asks questions, reads etc. To stay well informed
- Thinks "outside the box" and is not constrained by traditional ways of doing things.
- Offers suggestions to improve the ways things are done.
- Takes the initiative to try new things.

Learner & Stakeholder Focus

Maintaining learner/stakeholder focus, understanding their needs, providing realistic commitments, and taking responsibility for delivering on those commitments.

- Works with the team to develop a better understanding of the learner or stakeholders' circumstances to provide the most effective service.

- Engages with stakeholders whenever possible to better understand their business and build relationships.
- Works with the team to ensure that learners/stakeholders are kept informed as their requests are being managed.
- Seeks feedback from learners/stakeholders, listening and responding positively to suggestions and criticisms.
- Demonstrates awareness of their own ability to impact the learner or the stakeholder
- Asks questions to clarify the learner's/stakeholder's needs.
- Provides realistic expectations at the outset of an interaction to build confidence and trust.
- Goes out of their way to help the learner or stakeholder and offers alternate solutions where the request is impossible to meet.
- Answers learner/stakeholder questions or helps them to find the answer elsewhere.
- Provides personal attention to ensure each learner/stakeholder feels treated as an individual.

Results Focused and Business Aware

Maintaining a focus on the important issues to achieve and improve results and awareness, applying sound business principles and effective operational practices to drive a successful outcome.

- Works with team to ensure that sound business principles and operational practices are being applied and focuses the team on activities to achieve goals.
- Brings discipline to the team, encouraging them to find easier and more efficient ways of working.
- Encourages the team to focus their activities to meet the team's objectives continuously and sets measurable targets.
- Establishes team priorities and identifies critical tasks and milestones to help keep projects and individuals on track.
- Seeks to understand and apply basic business principles and operations and commits to action to achieve results.
- Seeks and develops efficiencies in day-to-day activities and shares them with others.
- Asks questions to build a better understanding of business guidelines and operational practices.
- Works to and meets tight deadlines.
- Applies extra effort and a positive attitude to handle periods of high demand.

Communication

Exchanging information and ideas with others to promote effective discussion and decision-making; promoting two-way communication.

- Exchanges information in an open, honest and clear manner to enhance Team Effectiveness
- Regularly asks for, and listens to, the views and opinions of others, showing genuine respect for what they have to say.
- Responds to others in a way that demonstrates he/she has heard and considered their opinions.
- Adjusts language, style and tone of communication to suit the audience.

- Brings forward to Management the ideas and concerns of his/her team to ensure they are heard.
- Openly voices and constructively shares differences of opinions yet is willing to modify perspective and demonstrate flexibility.
- Effectively communicates with others.
- Actively listens and asks questions to ensure mutual understanding.
- Uses the most effective means of communication, showing respect for the time constraints of others
- Conveys ideas clearly and concisely and gets to the point quickly.
- Writes clearly and concisely, checking with the reader to ensure understanding
- Uses open-ended and probing questions to elicit information beyond the initial request
- Shares information in an open and direct manner to help others make informed decisions

Specialist Knowledge, Expertise and Self Development

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Substantial knowledge and experience of special schools' senior leadership, including governance, school planning, complex needs provision, multidisciplinary engagement, safeguarding, risk management and the operational realities of special school settings. This knowledge and experience will successfully guide how the specialist represents the sector with the DEY and other relevant stakeholders and how they interact with ETBs and Community Special Schools.
- Specialist expertise that can support ETBI and ETBs in developing coherent, practical and sustainable supports to Community Special Schools.
- An ability to provide credible and solution-focused advice in complex or high-pressure situations, including where intensive support is required for a Community Special School in conjunction with the relevant ETB.
- Ability to provide up-to-date knowledge of national policy, legislation, circulars, guidance and emerging practice relevant to special education and special schools.

Health

A candidate for, and any person holding, the office must be fully competent and capable of undertaking the duties attached to the office and in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of the ability to render regular and efficient service.

Candidates must:

- Have the knowledge and ability to discharge the duties of the post concerned.
- Be suitable on the grounds of character.
- Be suitable in all other relevant respects for appointment to the post concerned

And if successful, they will not be appointed to the post unless they:

- Agree to undertake the duties attached to the post and accept the conditions under which the duties are or may be required to be performed.
- Are fully competent and available to undertake, and fully capable of undertaking the duties attached to the position.

Citizenship Requirement:

Candidates should note that eligibility to compete is open to citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA) or to non-EEA nationals with a valid work permit. The EEA consists of the Member States of the European Union along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Norway. Swiss citizens under EU agreements may also apply.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Terms of Appointment

This appointment will be for a one-year fixed-term contract, subject to a six-month probationary period. During the probationary period, the performance, conduct, attendance, capability and overall suitability for the post will be monitored and reviewed. ETBI may, where considered appropriate, extend the probationary period to a maximum of 11 months.

Where, during, or at the conclusion of the probationary period, ETBI determines that the required standards of performance, conduct, attendance, capability or suitability for the role have not been achieved, employment may be terminated. This post is not eligible for secondment. This post is not eligible for secondment.

Remuneration

The Grade VII (7) salary scale as of 1st June 2026 is €61,216 - €79,582 (including two long service increments)

Starting salary

Candidates should note that the starting salary will be at the minimum of the appropriate pay scale and will not be subject to negotiation.

Annual Leave

The employee will be entitled to 29 working days of holidays each year (in addition to the usual Public and Bank Holidays) to be taken at a time or times convenient to the ETBI. The successful candidate will be required to take annual leave for the period of the Christmas closure of ETBI.

Sick Leave

Sick Leave will be in accordance with established procedures and conditions for ETBI staff generally.

Termination

The appointment will be terminated by one month's notice in writing on either side. The notice period may also be waived if agreed by both parties.

Location

The contractual place of work is the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) Head Office or such other ETBI office location as may be determined by the General Secretary from time to time.

The nature of this role is such that the successful candidate will ordinarily perform their duties remotely, subject to the operational requirements of ETBI, with the prior agreement of the Line Manager. Remote working is an agreed working arrangement and does not alter the contractual place of work. ETBI reserves the right to review, amend or withdraw remote working arrangements in accordance with organisational requirements.

Travel will be required as part of this role. The successful candidate will be required to travel regularly within Ireland and, where necessary, internationally in the performance of their duties. The successful candidate is expected to maintain the flexibility necessary to fulfil these travel requirements and to attend such locations as may reasonably be required by ETBI.

Maternity / Adoptive / Carers / Parental / Force Majeure Leave

Maternity / Adoptive / Carers / Parental Leave will be granted in accordance with the arrangements authorised by the Minister for Education and Skills. The provisions of the Parental Leave Act, 1998 and any subsequent Acts replacing or amending that Act will apply to Force Majeure Leave.

Benefits

- Employee Assistance Service
- Pension Scheme
- Hybrid Working
- Staff Learning and Development

General

The above represents the principal conditions of service and is not intended to be the comprehensive list of all terms and conditions of employment which will be set out in the successful candidate's employment contract.

SELECTION PROCESS

How to Apply

Applicants should follow the link to the online application form at www.etbi.ie/recruitment. Only applications made through the online application process will be accepted.

The admission of a person to this competition, or invitation to take tests or attend the interview is not to be taken as implying that the ETBI is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements.

Notes:

Please note that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all applications are received on time. Any technical difficulties encountered by the sender when submitting applications are not the responsibility of ETBI. Therefore, candidates are strongly advised to submit applications well before **12 noon on Wednesday, 2nd September 2026** deadline.

Closing Date and Time:

Your application must be submitted and received no later than **12 noon on Wednesday, 2nd September 2026**. It will not be possible to submit applications after this date and time.

Please Note:

We acknowledge receipt of all applications. We endeavour to give as much notice as possible for interview dates etc. Candidates should make themselves available on the date(s) specified by the ETBI.

The Selection Process may include:

- Shortlisting of candidates based on the information contained in their application.

The Selection Process will include:

- A competitive interview
- Reference checking

Shortlisting:

Normally the number of applications received for a position exceeds that required to fill existing vacancies in the position. If the numbers applying for the position are such that it would not be practical to interview everyone, ETBI may decide to employ a short-listing process to select a group for interview who, based on an examination of the documents provided by you, appear to be the most suitable for the position.

This is not to suggest that other candidates are necessarily unsuitable, or incapable of the job, but rather that some candidates are, prima facie, better qualified and/or have more relevant experience. During any short-listing exercise that may be employed, ETBI examines the application forms and assesses them against pre-determined criteria based on the requirements of the position. It is therefore in your interest to provide a detailed and accurate account of your qualifications/experience on the application form.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Security Clearance:

ETBI is registered with the National Vetting Unit (NVU). As part of the Board's recruitment and selection process, offers of employment to all posts may be subject to NVU disclosure.

Other Important Information

ETBI will not be responsible for refunding any expenses incurred by candidates.

The admission of a person to a competition, invitation to attend an interview, or a successful result letter, is not to be taken as implying that the ETBI is satisfied that such a person fulfils the requirements or is not disqualified by law from holding the position.

Prior to recommending any candidate for appointment to this position Education and Training Boards Ireland will make all such enquiries that are deemed necessary to determine the suitability of that candidate. Until all stages of the recruitment process have been fully completed a final determination cannot be made nor can it be deemed or inferred that such a determination has been made. Should the person recommended for appointment decline or having accepted it, relinquish it, or should another vacancy arise, Education and Training Boards Ireland may at its discretion, select and recommend another person for appointment on the results of this selection process.

Candidates should note that any attempt to canvas support for an application will lead to disqualification.

Confidentiality

All enquiries, applications and all aspects of the proceedings are treated as strictly confidential and are not disclosed to anyone, outside those directly involved in that aspect of the process.

Deeming of candidature to be withdrawn

Candidates who do not attend for interview or another test when and where required by ETBI or who do not, when requested, furnish such evidence as the ETBI requires regarding any matter relevant to their candidature, will have no further claim to consideration.

Data Protection

ETBI processes data in compliance with current Data Protection legislation.

Feedback

Feedback will be provided on written request.

The latest date for receipt of completed applications for the above post is: 12 noon on Wednesday, 2nd September 2026

- **IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS AFTER THIS DATE AND TIME**
- **CV's WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED?**
- **SHORTLISTING OF CANDIDATES MAY TAKE PLACE**

ETBI IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER