

## Iffley Mead: Aiming for Specialist School Status

At Iffley Mead School's end-of-year assembly we had the very special pleasure of handing over a cheque for £1,242.21 (the proceeds from St Mary's Summer Market) to the Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Lynne Smith. As part of its bid for Specialist School Status, Iffley Mead needs to raise its target of £20,000. The government will add £15 to every £1 donated by sponsors. With our cheque, they are about halfway there.

Achieving Specialist School Status for pupils with behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties recognizes Iffley Mead as a 'centre of excellence' and opens the door to further development. The vision of the school is to re-engage many more young people who may be disaffected with their education, have little belief in their own abilities, and few aspirations. Specialist School funding will be used:

- to develop a Social Enterprise Centre which will incorporate 'The Food Factory', where young people can build their skills through preparing, cooking, and serving food;
- to work with mainstream schools to offer a bespoke package of support for girls at risk of exclusion;
- to provide training for schools across the county in Restorative Practices.

We all know the need, and how few schools there are like Iffley Mead. The assembly gave us a glimpse of the school in action, encouraging pupils, building self-esteem, rewarding improved attendance, improved attention, and the ability to help one another. The behaviour of the children and the immense dedication of the staff was so impressive. We wish all of you could have been there. It was a wonderful and very moving occasion. The school deserves all the support we can give it.

*Pat Alexander  
and Wendy Tyndale*