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Dear Parents and Carers,

The sun has been shining on us all which has been uplifting! The judges from The London Children's Flower Society visited us this week and commended our efforts with bulb planting to grow daffodils. Many gold certificates were also handed out – well done to all our green-fingered growers!

Our Community Club last Sunday was a damp but very productive morning. The pond area was transformed; bushes were pruned back, pathways were cleared and logs added to demarcate them. Wendy was pleased to have some keen assistants to help weed and improve the Edible Garden with some even taking produce home to cook for their lunch! We usually hold the Community Club garden sessions on the first Sunday of every month but as the next date will fall in the Easter break we have decided it will be on Sunday 22nd March instead. All children with their responsible adult are welcome to drop into the school garden between 10.00 and 12.00 to help with the pond and garden jobs, and to enjoy refreshments around the fire pit.

We are very pleased to share the news that we have been selected by the DfE to become a Lead School in the new Reception Networks Programme. Through this we will act as a regional leader for Reception improvement—setting the tone, inspiring confidence, and creating a positive and ambitious culture across many schools. We will also play a key part in bringing the wider early years system together. This includes collaborating with Stronger Practice Hubs, Best Start Family Hubs, and English and Maths Hubs to help ensure that families and children experience joined up support. We will play a key part in the evaluation of progress and feed this back to the DfE to support national evaluation which will help shape and strengthen the programme nationwide.

'We are delighted to confirm that we would like to offer Rockmount Primary School the position of Lead School within the Reception Networks, as part of our national programme to strengthen the quality of reception year provision across England and help achieve our ambition for 75% of children to reach a Good Level of Development by 2028.'

Your school stood out in a highly competitive national assessment process. We were truly impressed by the strength of your Reception practice, the expertise of your early years team, and the clear impact you are already making in your own school, and beyond — a reflection of the system leadership you are already demonstrating. Being selected from such a strong field is a significant achievement, and we want to congratulate you and your staff on this well-deserved recognition.'

(DfE RISE Reception Networks)

World Book Day yesterday was an exciting opportunity to celebrate our love of books and reading. There were some extremely creative outfits from children and adults alike – please see the website 'Latest News' to see some of the pictures. The children enjoyed visits from authors, celebration assemblies, costume and book parades and the children also had an opportunity to decorate a dolly peg as their favourite book character for a competition. There were some very creative and artistic entries which made the judging process very difficult – see some of the winning dolly peg characters on the website.

Many thanks to the families who used the email notification letter to advise us about their children fasting. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and holds great significance for Muslims around the world. This year, Ramadan is observed from 18th February until March 19th. It is a

time for reflection, self-improvement and spiritual growth and we are committed to ensuring that Ramadan is a smooth and positive experience in school for all children who are observing the fast. We wish all those families who are observing Ramadan a peaceful and blessed month.

The nearby roads are a lot calmer and safer for our children with the Healthy School Streets initiative. As a reminder, this excludes cars from driving into the roads next to the school between 8.00 and 9.30 in the morning and between 2.00 and 4.00 in the afternoon. Please remember that if you do drive into the streets, you will receive a fine from Croydon Council. Whilst the roads are quieter and safer, please remind your children of the need to take care; some of our pupil cyclists and scooter users are very speedy and a bit reckless on the roads and pathways. Vehicles still use these roads at drop off and pick up time so it is important that we reinforce good road safety understanding. The pedestrian crossing outside of the school gates should be used by all families to cross the road which will support our children to appreciate the need to use any available crossing to keep them safe.

Please can all families support us by reminding their children that we do not bring any toys into school. Our Wellbeing Areas are well stocked with fidgets and other resources, which staff will support the children to use should they need to. For safety reasons, no children should wear lanyards during breaktimes or lunchtimes, as these can present a risk during active play. Lanyards with attached fidgets are also not appropriate in school. The only exception is where a child is on our Inclusion Register and has a *signed Individual Education Plan (IEP)* which clearly lists specific, agreed sensory tools. In these cases, staff will ensure these items are managed safely in line with the child's plan. Otherwise, no personal toys, lanyards or personal fidgets should be brought into school.

We have a busy week ahead with two main areas of focus for our work in school. We have a planned series of assemblies and lessons focussing on our understanding and celebration of neurodiversity ahead of the national Neurodiversity Celebration Week which starts on Monday 16th March. It is also Stem Week and we are holding our **STEM Fair next Tuesday** after school in the main hall. Please see the letter which was sent out last week for more details. We look forward to seeing many of you at the Stem Fair to join our young scientists, mathematicians, engineers and all round multi-talented children!

You will have received emails from us this week to make your appointments for parent/carer evenings. We look forward to discussing your child's progress with you on Tuesday 24th March or Wednesday 25th March (please note that a couple of classes are offering different dates).

Have a lovely weekend,

Helen Carvall