

## **Grove Road joins Rocket Science experiment**

Year 1 children at Grove Road Primary school have planted rocket seeds as part of an experiment with astronaut Tim Peake. The school is one of 10,000 taking part across the UK in a 6-week experiment to compare the growth of seeds that have been to space, with those that have stayed on Earth.

In September, 2kg of rocket seeds were flown to the International Space Station where they spent several months in microgravity before returning to Earth in March 2016. The aim of the experiment is to see if microgravity can affect the growth mechanisms in seeds.

The children at Grove Road were given two packets of seeds containing 100 seeds each, one set that had been to space, and one that hadn't; the differences in growth rate will be measured over six weeks. Results will be added to an online database so that they can be compared across all schools in the UK; however, pupils won't know which seed packet contained which seeds until all results have been collected and analysed by professional biostatisticians.

This type of comparison has never been made on this scale and the results will be genuinely useful science, as the exact impact from zero gravity and cosmic radiation are not known. It's a voyage of discovery for the children to see what growing plants in space can teach us about life on Earth and whether we can sustain human life in space through the production of our own food. The Rocket Science project can help us prepare for the next stage of human exploration.

Year 1 teacher and Science Coordinator at Grove Road, Chloe Lea, explains: "As part of our topic 'Explorers and Inventors', the children have been following Tim Peake's journey as well as doing some investigating of their own as to what conditions plants require for optimum growth. They are so excited to have been selected to be involved in his experiment, and will be sharing the results with the rest of the school. This hands-on opportunity allows the children to develop their communication, patience and observational skills, whilst making links to the world around them, and even beyond them. It's wonderful to engage such young children in the infinite possibilities of space exploration and the growth and

development of plants; we could be inspiring some future scientists! We would love the children to think that one day they too could be part of ground-breaking experiments and opportunities to explore”.

