**P6 pupils at Academy Primary School in Saintfield are preparing to become space biologists and embark on a voyage of discovery by growing seeds that have been into space.**

In September, 2kg of rocket seeds were flown to the International Space Station on Soyuz 44S where they spent several months in microgravity before returning to Earth last month.

The seeds have been sent as part of Rocket Science, an educational project launched by the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and the UK Space Agency.

The Academy Primary is one of 10,000 schools to receive a packet of 100 seeds from space, which they will grow alongside seeds that haven’t been to space and measure the differences over seven weeks.

The children won’t know which seed packet contains which seeds until all results have been collected by the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and analysed by professional biostatisticians.

The out-of-this-world, nationwide science experiment will enable the children to think more about how we could preserve human life on another planet in the future, what astronauts need to survive long-term missions in space and the difficulties surrounding growing fresh food in challenging climates.

Stephen Moore, headmaster, said: “We are very excited to be taking part in Rocket Science. This experiment is a fantastic way of teaching our children to think more scientifically and share their findings with the whole school. The P6 pupils were very excited to watch the launch as part of their topic on Space and are looking forward to monitoring and recording the progress of the seeds.”

Rocket Science is just one educational project from a programme developed by the UK Space Agency to celebrate British ESA astronaut Tim Peake’s Principia mission to the ISS and inspire young people to look into careers in STEM subjects: science, technology, engineering and maths subjects, and including horticulture.