Each summer, Reach Cambridge students live in the historic colleges of the University of Cambridge, giving them the opportunity to get a real taste for student life in the city. Throughout the year, Downing College is home to hundreds of undergraduate graduate students, graduate students, and staff, but every July and August students from Reach Cambridge call it home for three weeks.


The stunning Downing College

Downing College, founded in 1800, has over 200 years of history. This history is reflected in the beautiful architecture across the site. The layout of the college takes the shape of a quad. Hemmed in by stunning sandy coloured building is the Paddock – a large field that can be used for playing sports and which always comes in handy during Reach for football, volleyball, and other fun and games. There are also tennis and basketball courts, so the sports facilities really are top notch.

If you prefer a gentle stroll to running around with a football there is plenty to explore – the gardens are truly delightful. Wondering through the grounds and relaxing in the sun (yes, it is sunny in England sometimes!) really does give the feeling of walking around an old English stately home.

One of our favourite things about staying in Downing is dinner time! Reach Cambridge students are lucky enough to eat in the dining hall (known simply as 'Hall' by Cambridge students) where many of the college's students and staff eat their meals every day. The dining hall is beautiful – it's lovely to sit down after a long day of Reach fun and absorb the wonderful atmosphere of the room (whilst enjoying some tasty food of course!).


The dining hall at Downing College, laid out for a special formal dinner

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Evening sky over Downing College

Downing College is a fantastic place with a rich history. Famous alumni of the college include actors Thandie Newton and John Cleese, and we feel very lucky that Reach too can call it home every summer.