

This year Reach Cambridge's July program saw over 70 students living in the beautiful Downing College, located in the heart of Cambridge's historic city centre. The neoclassical buildings are set in vast grounds, making the college a calm green oasis amidst the hustle and bustle of Cambridge life. From the moment that the students arrived they were struck by the beauty and tranquility of the college, with one student saying 'it feels like we own the place!'

The students, who are all from a diverse range of backgrounds and study a variety of subjects, live together on college 'staircases', just like the University students do during term time. Each staircase has three floors and there are around seven rooms on each floor. It has been fantastic to see students of all different ages and nationalities forging friendships that will hopefully last for a long time.

The majestic Downing College

Football on the Paddock Many students have enjoyed spending their free time relaxing in the sun, while others choose to go shopping in town. The spacious grounds include 'The Paddock', which is the perfect place for afternoon sports organised by the supervisors. We played football, volleyball, tennis and rounders to name but a few! We also hosted the Reach Olympics, which amongst the traditional events that you might expect includes more unusual ones such as a wheelbarrow race!

The evening begins with dinner in the college's magnificent Great Hall. The hall has splendid views over the grounds, and with the sun streaming through the windows it is an incredible sight! With an excellent choice of food on offer, mealtimes at Downing are a real delight. A highlight of my evening is the 11pm sign in, where I got to chat to the students about their day. It was great to hear about what they learned in the morning classes, as well as what they have been getting up to in the afternoon and evening.

As we came towards the end of the program, it was great to see how the students continued to develop in maturity, independence and confidence. It has been a fantastic three weeks with lots of sport, exciting excursions and incredible weather. The students really have experienced all that

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