



Sora

Where students read

Queensbridge School aims to eliminate barriers to unequal reading access among students

Pairing a physical library and a Sora digital library to meet students where they are



Queensbridge School, located in South Birmingham, is a mixed comprehensive with a richly diverse student population. A significant percentage of students have special education needs and a quarter of pupils receive free school meals, so providing learners with equal opportunities for academic achievement, no matter their circumstance, is of paramount importance. It's one of the reasons school librarian, Caroline Chilton and whole school reading lead, Alice Paetel, have ensured all students have access to a robust collection of ebooks, audiobooks and magazines with Sora, the student reading app from OverDrive and a subscription to Secondary EbooksNOW – a handpicked collection of digital books shared among participating secondary schools.

The challenge: **Improve access to the right books**

Prior to adopting Sora, Chilton and Paetel sought to solve for several challenges in students' reading experiences. There was a greater need to engage reluctant readers in general, complicated by the fact that some students had limited access to reading materials at home. Queensbridge sought to modernise its approach to reading and align with students' tech-driven lifestyles, while also ensuring inclusivity.

The solution: **An always-available digital reading platform**

A digital library gives Queensbridge students not only anytime, anywhere access to more books, but access to the right books for them, from both school and personal devices. More than 300 learners use Sora to choose titles that interest them whether it's by subject matter or format. The school further incentivises students to read for pleasure with a reward-based tracking system within Sora.

Formats like magazines and graphic novels have been a great way to support pleasure reading. Physical copies of graphic novels can be expensive, so Chilton piques students' interest by purchasing print copies of only the first few installments of a series. Then, she directs them to Sora to finish reading the series digitally. Once in Sora, they begin to discover even more titles that keep them reading.

Staff have been able to seamlessly integrate titles on Sora into their classroom as well. "Sora has been a great resource for staff to read themselves or use extracts within lessons; especially with the new introduction of magazines," said Chilton, "They have been used in our whole school focus on Disciplinary Literacy across the curriculum in staff training."

Chilton and Paetel have shared the variety of ways they've been able to engage students with Sora, including a Sora book club as well as dedicated tablets for Sora within the library that students can conveniently access during social periods. Once a week for half an hour, Queensbridge students have DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time where audiobooks are often played as an alternative format to further reading engagement. They also utilise popular trend, BookTok, to appeal to students and feature a "BookTok made me read it" display of titles available in Sora trending on TikTok.

Feedback on Sora has been overwhelmingly positive, with particular appreciation for its role during periods of remote learning. Usage of Sora remains constant among students, with no decrease in physical lending rates, supporting OverDrive's belief that traditional and digital reading resources are needed to work hand-in-hand to help foster a love of reading. Queensbridge School's partnership with Sora continues to support their dedication to both academic achievement and strong embedded values of respect, rigour and responsibility.

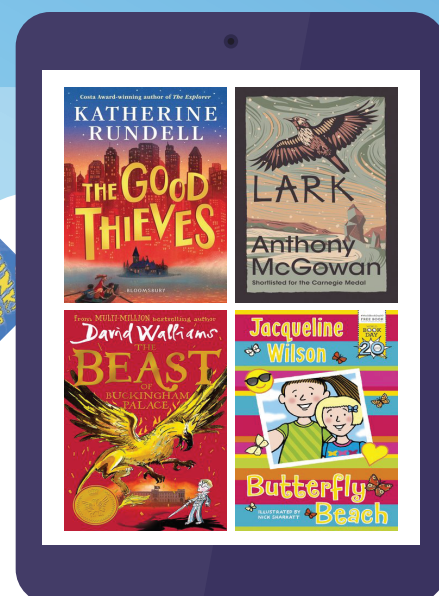


The affordable way to support reading & literacy goals

With Primary and Secondary Ebooks NOW, schools get instant access to a shared collection of thousands of premium ebooks, audiobooks and magazines. This unrivalled offering not only saves schools money, but ensures students of all ages, interests and needs can find something to read.

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