



Website Evaluation

The Cooking Academy

thecookingacademy.co.uk



Module: LCLM 4002 - Digital Marketing & Web Usability

Assignment Type: Task 3 - Website Evaluation Report

Date: March 2026

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SKILLS	EUROPEAN	ASIAN	HEALTH MANAGEMENT	BESPOKE CLASSES
Beginner's Cookery Class	Italian Cooking Classes	Malaysian Cooking Class		One To One Cookery Class
Fish Cooking Classes		Indian Cooking Classes	Good Gut Health & Microbiome Masterclass	One Day Private And Exclusive Cookery Class For Friends & Family - £1200
Knife Skills Masterclass		Asian Street Food Cookery Classes	Menopause Symptom Relief Cookery Class	
		Korean Cooking Class	Anti-Inflammatory & Heart Health Cooking	
		Thai Cooking Class		
		Vietnamese Cooking Classes		

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Website Evaluation: The Cooking Academy

thecookingacademy.co.uk

1. Introduction

This report takes a look at the website for The Cooking Academy (thecookingacademy.co.uk), a small business that runs cooking classes and culinary experiences. The goal is to get a sense of how well the site works, does it look good, is it easy to use, does it communicate clearly with potential customers? Where there is room for improvement, practical changes have been suggested.

As Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) point out, a well-designed website is one of the most important tools a small business has, it shapes how customers perceive you before they have even picked up the phone.

2. Website Overview

The Cooking Academy's website is built around promoting what the business does: cooking classes, corporate events, and private experiences. The homepage covers the main bases, courses on offer, how to book, and how to get in touch.

At its core, the site is trying to do four things: pull in new customers, explain what is available, make booking straightforward, and come across as trustworthy and credible.

3. Design and Usability

Layout and Visual Design

First impressions are good. The site has a clean, professional feel, and the food photography is genuinely appetising, exactly the kind of imagery that makes you want to sign up for a class. The branding is consistent throughout, with clear headings that make the page easy to scan.

That said, a few pages feel a bit text-heavy, and the lack of breathing room makes some sections harder to read than they need to be. As Krug (2014) argues, a good website finds the right balance between visuals and content, and here, the scales tip slightly too far towards text in places.

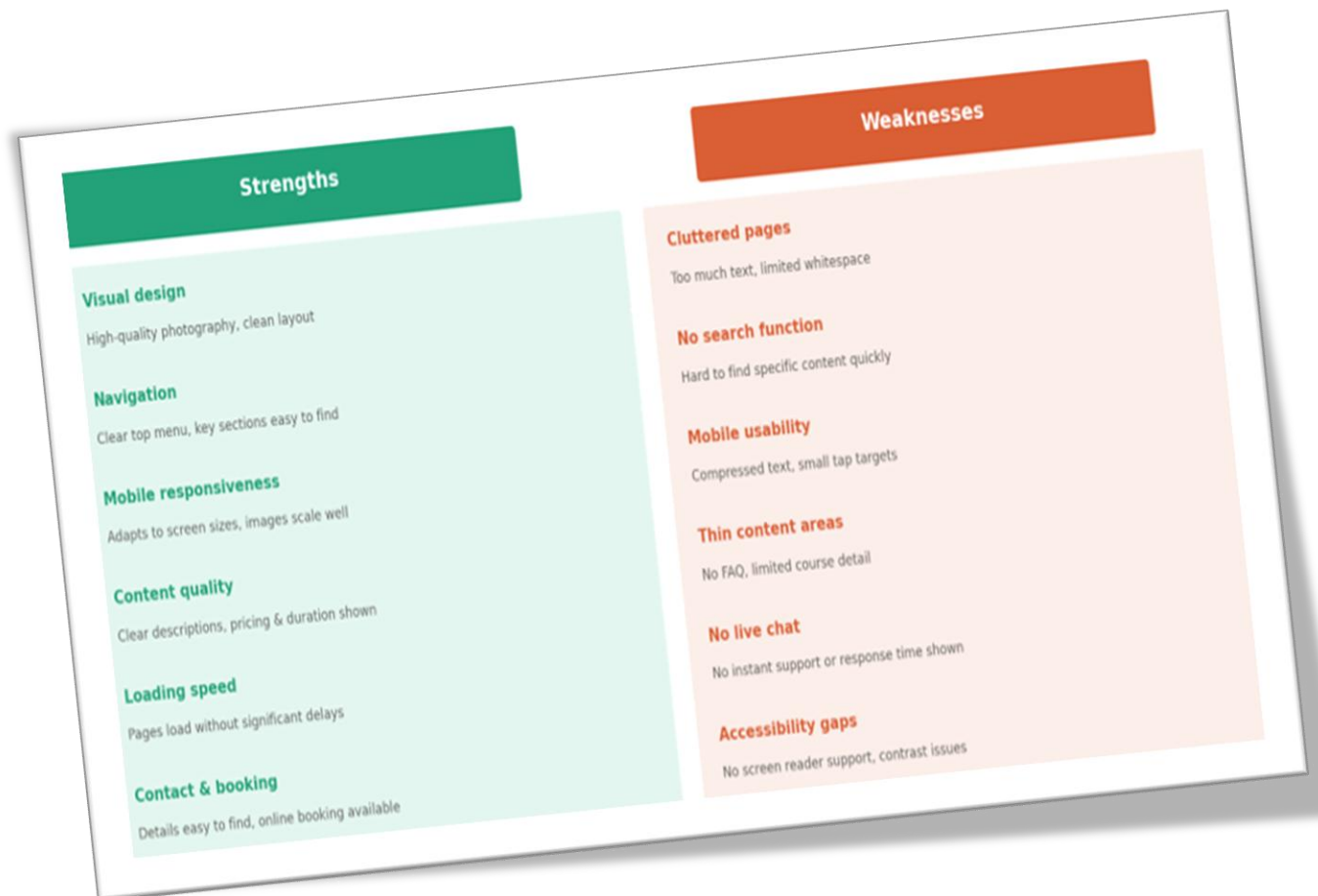


Figure 1: Strengths and weaknesses summary across all evaluation areas

Navigation

Getting around the site is mostly fine. The menu sits clearly at the top of the page, and the key sections, Classes, Contact, are not hard to find. But some information takes more clicks than it should to reach, and there is no search bar, which is a missed opportunity. If someone lands on the site knowing exactly what they want, they should not have to hunt for it.

Mobile Experience

The site holds up reasonably well on mobile, which matters more than ever given how much browsing happens on phones. Images scale nicely and the layout adapts to smaller screens. However, some text ends up feeling cramped, and the buttons could be bigger, tapping a small link on a touchscreen is frustrating in a way that a mouse click never is.

4. Content

Quality of Information

The site does a solid job of explaining what is on offer, courses are described clearly, with pricing and duration included, which is exactly what someone needs when deciding whether to book. The tone is warm and fits the brand well.

Where it falls short is depth. A few sections feel a little thin, and there is no FAQ page, which means customers with common questions have no obvious place to turn. A well-stocked FAQ can save both customers and the business a lot of back-and-forth.

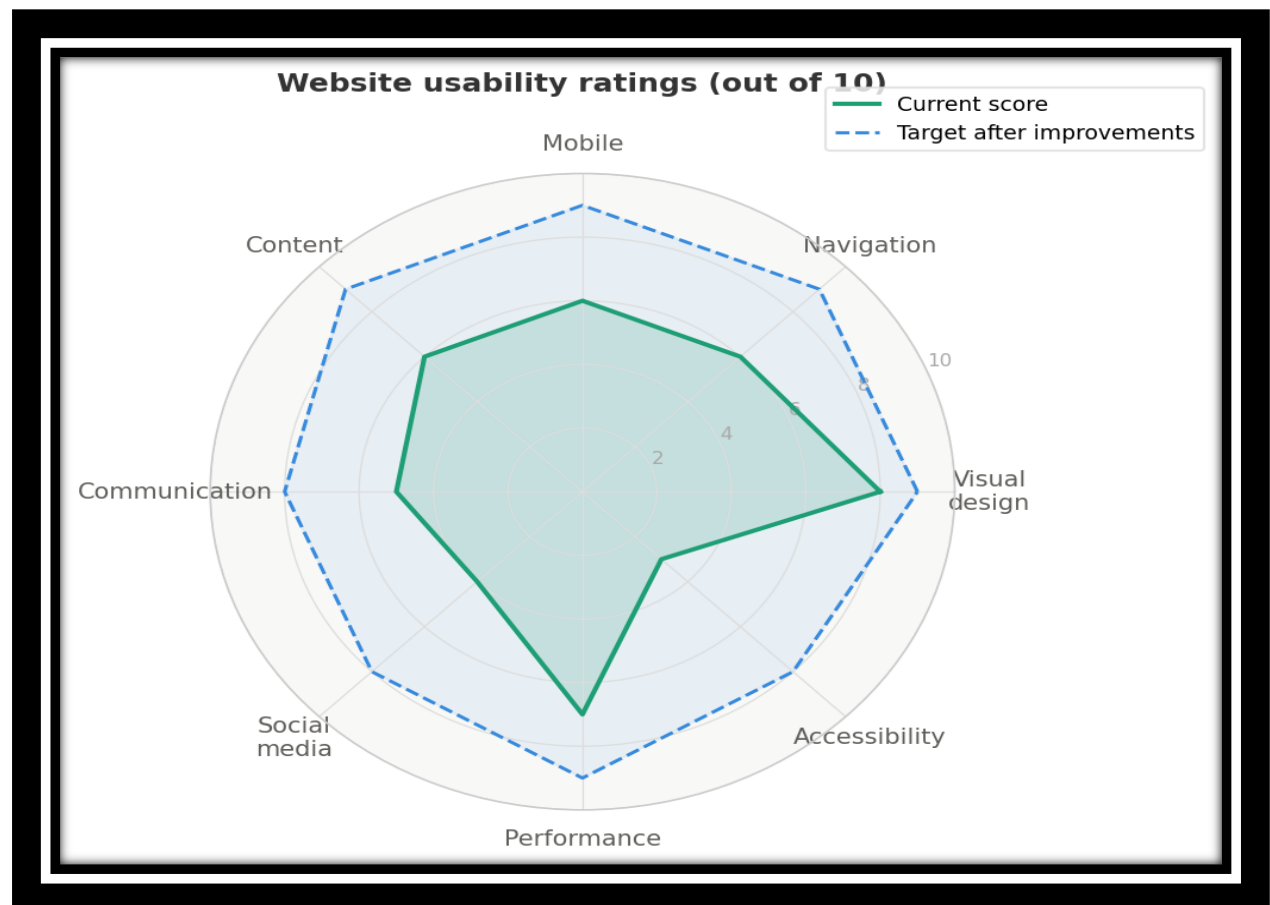


Figure 2: Usability ratings across key website categories (current vs. target scores)

Use of Media

The photography is a real asset, high quality and relevant, it makes the experiences feel tangible. But the site stops there. There are no videos, which feels like a missed opportunity; a short clip of a class in action would do more than almost anything else to sell the experience. There are no interactive elements either, which keeps the site feeling fairly static.

5. Communication with Customers

Contact Information

Contact details are easy to find, and the booking system means customers can take direct action without having to pick up the phone. The gap here is real-time support, there is no live chat, and the site does not indicate how quickly enquiries get a response. For someone on the fence about booking, that uncertainty can be enough to make them look elsewhere.

Social Media

The business is active on social media, which is good for visibility, but the website does not make the most of that. The social media icons are not particularly prominent, and there is no embedded feed or live updates, so visitors to the site get no sense of the community or activity happening on those platforms.

6. Technical Performance

Loading Speed

Pages load reasonably quickly, which is important, research from Google (2018) shows that even modest delays increase the number of visitors who leave before a page finishes loading. The main watch-out here is image size; large photos can slow things down noticeably on slower connections.

Accessibility

This is probably the area most in need of attention. Basic readability is fine, but there is no visible support for users with disabilities, no text resizing options, no apparent screen reader compatibility, and some colour contrast issues in places. This is not just about inclusivity (though that matters); it is increasingly a compliance issue too.

7. Recommendations

A few targeted improvements would make a real difference:

- **Search and navigation**, add a search bar and simplify the menu so key information is no more than a click or two away.
- **Mobile**, tighten up the text layout on smaller screens and make buttons easier to tap.
- **Content**, add an FAQ page, flesh out course descriptions, and include customer testimonials.
- **Engagement**, a short video showcasing a class would be a game-changer; interactive features like booking previews would also help.
- **Communication**, live chat support and a stated response time would give customers more confidence.
- **Social media**, move the icons somewhere more visible, and consider embedding a feed so the site feels more alive.
- **Performance**, compress images and run regular performance checks.
- **Accessibility**, add accessibility tools, improve colour contrast, and test with screen readers.

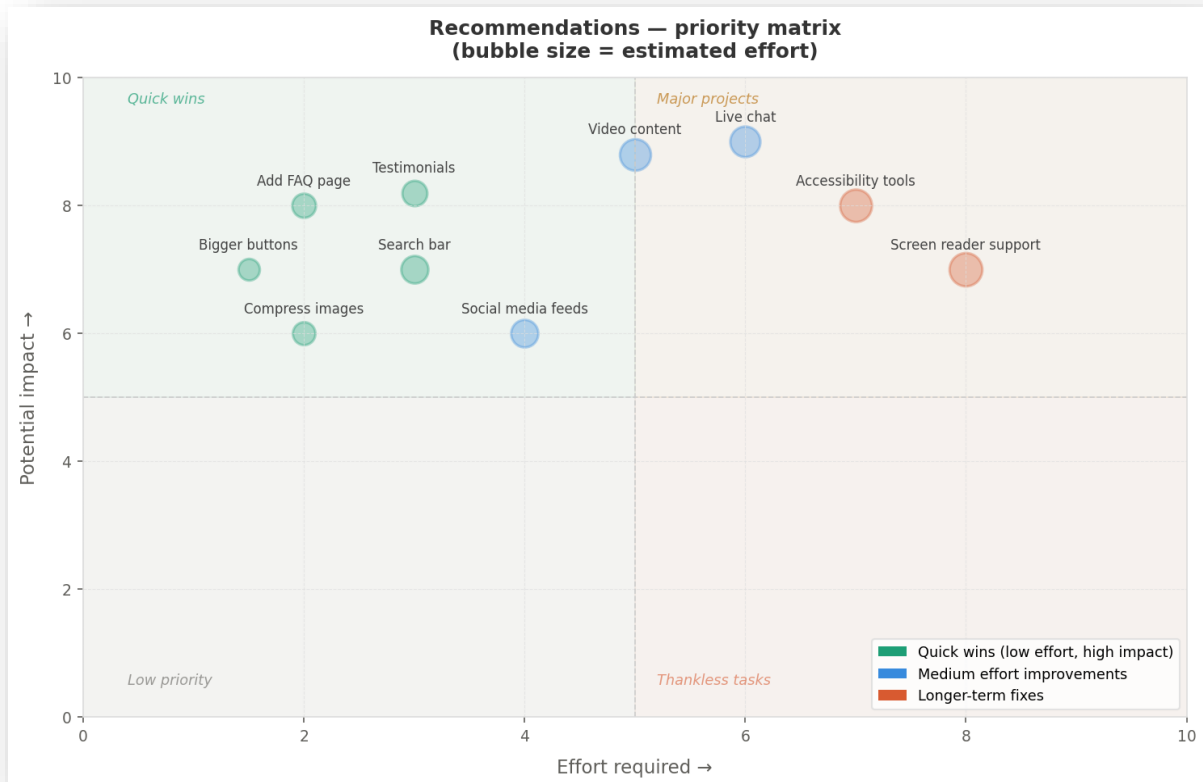


Figure 3: Recommendations priority matrix, impact vs. effort (bubble size = effort required)

8. Conclusion

Overall, The Cooking Academy has a website that does the basics well. It looks appealing, communicates what the business offers, and gives customers a way to book. But there is a gap between a functional site and a great one, and closing that gap does not require a full redesign. Better navigation, stronger mobile experience, a bit more content depth, and some attention to accessibility would meaningfully improve how users experience the site, and ultimately, how many of them go on to book a class.

References

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