

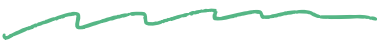


Smart School Websites



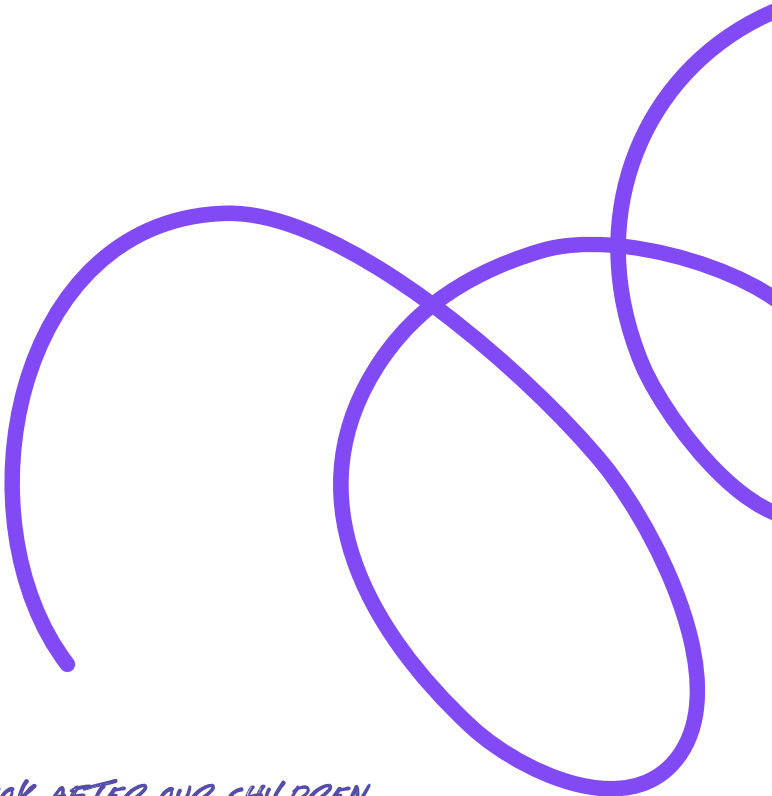
Best Practices for Content, Images & User Experience



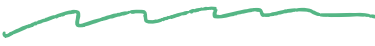


Contents

- 3. Too Many Images = Poor Website Performance
- 4. Mobile User Experience Matters
- 5. Google Cares About Page Speed
- 6. Best Practice: Less Is More



WE LOOK AFTER YOU, SO THAT YOU CAN LOOK AFTER OUR CHILDREN



Too Many Images = Poor Website Performance

Uploading large numbers of images to a single page, especially class pages or galleries, can significantly slow down your website. Pages that take too long to load cause frustration — especially for parents and carers trying to quickly access information.

Large image volumes also take up valuable storage and can cause issues when saving or editing pages in your content management system.

- A Year 2 class page contains **over 150 images** from various school events throughout the year. Because the images are large and uncompressed, the page takes **10–15 seconds to fully load** on a standard mobile device.

For parents on the go — possibly using mobile data — this means **frustration, confusion, and missed information**. Many will leave the page before it finishes loading.

- A school's gallery section features **1,200 photos** from multiple years, all on a single page. There are no clear headings, captions, or separation by event.

As a result, visitors must **endlessly scroll** to find what they're looking for, and often **give up before engaging** with the content. Key highlights of school life are buried and easily overlooked.

⚠ What This Means for You

Too many images don't just affect the look of the website — they impact speed, storage, editor functionality, and most importantly, the user journey.

That's why we strongly recommend:

- Keeping galleries focused with 10–20 key images per page
- Regularly reviewing and removing outdated or repetitive photos
- Linking to external, secure galleries for full albums

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Mobile User Experience Matters

The majority of school website visitors access the site on their **phones**. Long galleries that require constant scrolling, especially with near-identical photos, create a poor user experience and make it difficult for parents to find what they need.

Keeping galleries short and focused (e.g., 10–20 key images per event) helps visitors enjoy the highlights without being overwhelmed.

- A parent opens a gallery with **high-resolution images** while on mobile data (not Wi-Fi). The page takes **a long time to load** and uses **over 100MB of data**.
This frustrates the user and creates a negative perception of the website — especially for families with limited data or slower connections.
- On a phone screen, pages with too many images cause:
 1. **Frequent layout shifts** while images load
 2. Buttons or links being **pushed off-screen**
 3. Difficulties using assistive tech (e.g., screen readers can't describe unlabelled images)

This affects both **accessibility compliance** and the ability for all users to interact confidently with the site.

Google Cares About Page Speed – And You Should Too

Google ranks websites not just based on content, but on how well they perform — especially on mobile devices. A slow, image-heavy school website won't just frustrate parents — it will also hurt your visibility in Google search results.

Google measures performance using a set of standards called **Core Web Vitals**.

Core Web Vital	What It Means	Why It Matters
LCP – Largest Contentful Paint	How fast your main content loads	If images are too large or too many, the page takes longer to load
FID – First Input Delay	How quickly the site responds to a click	If your page is overloaded, users have to wait before clicking works
CLS – Cumulative Layout Shift	Does content jump around while loading?	Big images loading slowly cause content to shift — confusing and frustrating for users

Example 2: Long Class Pages

The Year 1 class page includes full weekly updates and dozens of photos each time. Over time, the page becomes extremely long.

Result:

- LCP and CLS scores drop — the page is considered **slow and unstable**
- On mobile, buttons shift out of view, making it hard for users to click links or navigate
- Google may **deprioritize** the page in mobile search results

✗ What Happens If Your Page Speed Is Poor?

- 📉 Lower rankings in **Google search results** — especially important for attracting new families
- 🕒 Slow loading = **higher bounce rates** (users leave quickly)

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Best Practice: Less Is More

When it comes to school website content — especially images — **quality is more important than quantity**.

Too many photos, especially when unorganised or duplicated, can clutter your pages, slow down your site, and make it harder for parents and visitors to find what they're looking for. A simpler, more curated website not only looks better, but works better too.

What to Aim For:

- **10–20 carefully selected images** per class or event
- Only include images that tell a **story or add meaningful value**
- Group and label galleries by term, class, or event for easy navigation
- Compress large images before uploading (aim for under 300–500 KB per image)
- Remove old, outdated, or duplicate photos from previous years

When uploading content, ask yourself:



“If I were a parent on my phone during the school run — could I quickly find and view the highlights?”

If not, it might be time to cut back and simplify.

Remember:

- A leaner website = **faster loading, better usability**
- Fewer images = **easier updates and less storage**
- Better performance = **higher Google search rankings**
- Cleaner content = **stronger first impression** for prospective families and Ofsted reviewers

By keeping things clear, focused, and purposeful, you'll make sure your website is a powerful, user-friendly tool that reflects the best of your school — without overwhelming your visitors or your CMS.

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