



*Helping
schools
serve
smarter.*

Tilda

FOODSERVICE

Wholegrains pupils actually want to eat

How Bentley New Village School is using familiar favourites to introduce more wholegrains, vegetables and pulses.

Meeting the School Food Standards is not just about what appears on the menu. It is about creating meals that children recognise, choose and enjoy.

For school caterers, that means finding practical ways to introduce more vegetables, pulses, fibre and wholegrains through dishes that feel natural and appealing.

The School Food Standards' 50/50 approach encourages caterers to introduce more wholegrains while maintaining the taste, texture and appearance pupils already know. One practical way schools are supporting this approach is by introducing brown and white rice into familiar recipes, helping pupils become accustomed to wholegrains.

Making nutrition feel familiar

Simple, recognisable recipes can make healthier ingredients easier to accept. Rice-based dishes give caterers a flexible starting point for building meals around vegetables, beans, pulses and lean proteins. They can be adapted across different flavour profiles, from curries and chilli to burrito-style dishes and one-pot recipes, helping schools introduce greater variety without making menus feel unfamiliar.

This matters because balanced menu planning is most successful when it works for pupils as well as kitchens. A meal can meet the right standards on paper, but it only delivers real value if children are willing to eat it.

Contact your local Tilda representative to find out more



Introducing variety through recipe design

Bentley New Village School introduced a Mexican Rice & Bean dish to add variety to its menu and bring together ingredients that support healthier eating.

The dish combines Tilda Brown & White Rice, beans and vegetables in a format that is colourful, flavourful and easy for primary school pupils to eat. For the kitchen team, it also works well operationally: one-pot dishes are quick to prepare, straightforward to serve and well suited to busy school lunch periods.

Beans are increasingly encouraged as part of a healthy diet thanks to their protein and fibre content, while vegetables and wholegrains help create a more varied plate. At Bentley, bringing these ingredients together in a familiar rice-based dish has helped make them feel more accessible.

The school has also found that its diverse pupil community plays a positive role. Many children are already familiar with these ingredients and flavours, which helps encourage others to try something new.

Encouraging pupils to try something different.

Introducing new dishes takes time. Bentley's feedback reflects the reality of school catering: some pupils embrace new recipes straight away, while others need repeated exposure before they are ready to try something different. That makes recipe design especially important.

Using recognisable ingredients, simple formats and approachable flavours can help reduce barriers. Rice provides a useful base because it is widely accepted, easy to pair with other ingredients and works well in dishes children quickly understand.

In Bentley's case, the Mexican Rice & Bean dish gives pupils another nutritious choice while supporting greater menu variety.



**Contact your local Tilda
representative to find out more**





Ideas to take back to your own kitchen

Every school approaches nutritional compliance differently, but there are some useful principles that can help make healthier recipes easier to introduce.

- 1. Use familiar bases to introduce new ingredients.** Rice can help make beans, pulses and vegetables feel more approachable by placing them within dishes pupils already recognise.
- 2. Think about format as well as ingredients.** One-pot dishes can support nutrition goals while remaining practical for preparation, service and portion control.
- 3. Allow time for acceptance.** New dishes may not be adopted by every year group immediately, but repeated exposure and familiar flavours can help build confidence over time.

Looking ahead

Meeting the School Food Standards with confidence means creating meals that work in real school kitchens and real dining rooms. Bentley New Village School demonstrates how thoughtful recipe design and familiar ingredients can help make healthier choices more accessible for pupils. By combining wholegrains, vegetables and pulses in dishes children recognise and enjoy, schools can support the School Food Standards while continuing to build varied, appealing menus.

Join the conversation

Looking for more inspiration for your school menus?

[Explore our education recipes](#)

[Discover the Tilda Foodservice range](#)