

Cartagena, 13th March 2016

I visited Ysgol Llanllechid in North Wales on 28th Sep 2015 on a journalistic assignment about the KiVa programme to be published in the Spanish magazine XL Semanal, the most read weekly in Spain. From the very first moment I entered in the Year 5+6 class it was an extraordinary and unforgettable day. They greeted me with a warm and collective "Hola, ¿cómo estás?" and afterwards, every boy and girl I encountered in the yard, the corridors or the dinning room said "¡Hola!" with a big smile. Roles changed and I had to answer tons of questions by the children about my job, my country, our schools, my student days... and of course, my impressions about Wales, including castles, rugby or Gareth Bale.

I was invited to participate in the class and enjoyed every minute I spent in the school. I ate the same food the children eat, took part in the lessons and had in-depth conversations about KiVa and the school with the Deputy head Huw Jones, and later with investigators at the Bangor University, that were extremely useful for my article. But the most enduring impression, six months later, is the spirit of team, the cohesiveness of the group, the sense of inclusion I felt... The school was a safe haven for children where nobody was apart, where everyone could participate, where curiosity, ingenuity, collaboration, friendship and solidarity were the rules and where you could feel almost tangibly that education is (like love in the famous song) in the air, not only in the books or the blackboard. I have been in several countries (of course in Spain, but also in Finland, India, South Korea, etc.) and in all kind of schools doing articles about education, but I never sensed such a feeling of empathy between all the subjects that form the educative community: children, teachers and parents. They were like a big family and I was honored to be part of that family for one day, and in a sense, I have the inner belief that I still form part of it.

Carlos Manuel Sánchez

Journalist

Spain

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carlos Sánchez', written in a light grey or blue ink.