

Dissolving means disappearing

A parent was supporting a lesson in Y5 about dissolving.

Pupils had seen the teacher stir salt into warm water and noticed that it had 'disappeared'

The teacher asked the pupils what they thought had happened. They said "it has gone", "disappeared" "You can't see it but it may still be there" "It's dissolved" "It's melted"

In order to test their ideas the teacher said they were to put some of the clear water onto glass saucers (pyrex) and then the parent would take the pupils in groups of 8 to the stove where they could watch as the water evaporated.

The parent showed each group the water "steaming" off, so that eventually nothing was left. Unfortunately the parent saw some white 'scum' left behind on the saucer, but reassured the pupils "Don't worry about that – it sometimes happens when you boil water away - but you can see that the salt has completely disappeared." With that the parent took the pupils back to the classroom and collected the next group of 8.

Moral:

Make sure your willing and useful helpers understand the science before you allow them to 'run' an activity like this.