

2.3m inflatables on test

Excel SL230

PRICE: £479

Contact: www.excel-inflatables.co.uk

One of a range which also includes a dinghy with a slatted floor, the Excel SL230 had good, long oars (142cm) with captive, 'pin'-type rowlocks and appreciable legroom (80cm), and its inflatable floor added rigidity and seemed to reduce leeway when rowing across the wind. It's only certified for two people, and when loaded as such was dry and comfortable. The easiest rowing position for two proved to be sitting side-by-side with an oar each. The fittings were good quality, and the inflatable floor was bonded in.

Under power the boat stayed dry, and was best with both passengers sitting on the thwart. Sitting on the tubes was an option, but the helm tended to get wet trousers in a sharp turn. The thwart attaches by sliding onto a bolt-rope and was secure in use. Packed, it weighed 20.5kg and had a sturdy zipped bag, although its metal zips would be susceptible to corrosion in salt water.



Long oars gave the Excel SL230 good performance