

BMW 420i – Road Test

Published: December 15, 2025

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/bmw-420i-road-test/>



Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) reports: “It’s hard to precisely put your finger on it, but it’s fair to say that the BMW 420i M Sport Coupé fits like a glove around a driver.”

A development from the 3-series Coupé and Convertibles, the 4-series has been in the range since 2013 and today comes in both bodystyles as well as a Gran Coupé with a choice of four or six cylinder petrol engines with rear or all wheel drive and some fully electric versions.

The range spans the £45,300 to £63,340 bracket and the most popular is our test car’s specification.

The standard model’s price was £43,750 but to illustrate some of additional equipment available it was fitted with about £8,375 of options, including Arctic Blue metallic paint, 19-



inch double spoke alloy wheels, M Sport package pro, heated wheel, heated electric front seats with driver memory and Comfort Pack.

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Now you can tell a lot about a car simply by opening a door and sitting inside with a reassuring clunk as the door closes.

The eye-candy inside the BMW 420i M Sport Coupé is so attractive even if it's a bit dark for some tastes, with carefully placed brightwork, nicely textured surfaces and soft touch elements.

The beefy steering wheel exudes strength and the major and minor controls operate with a light but precise action below a large infotainment screen in the fascia centre, while the driving instruments directly in front of the driver are big, comprehensive and clear, altering in colour through the four driving modes of eco, comfort, sport and individual, selected from console buttons next to the driver's hip.

The software in M Sport derivatives has been sharpened up for enthusiastic changes and driving but all have an eight-speed configuration. The changes, whichever mode was selected, were almost imperceptible but the car just instantly changed its character.



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Moving between all the settings we achieved a good 39 mpg average over urban, country and motorway sections.

The steering was unaffected by road surface changes but remained smooth and precise with a good turning circle, but it was arguably the footbrake which most impressed with its needle-like precision, feedback, power and silence in slowing from the highest speed to standstill in a few seconds. You could push hard or feather it to stop without any drama.

The Autohold parking brake worked on the steepest slopes and made town driving a dawdle.

Secondary controls were right to hand and well placed with fairly good marking as well and the heating and ventilation included heated seats on our test car for greater comfort on colder mornings.

We have grown to appreciate the three-zone heated steering wheel as well.

Driver and passenger appreciated the heated seats as well as their adjustment room but the low profile roofline meant it was a bit of a twist to slip into them and only the most agile would attempt getting into the twin rear seats.

Leg and headroom was short in the rear, a lot better in front.

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Ride comfort was surprisingly good for a sporting coupe. You could hear the suspension working away and the tyres made a constant drumming sound but the occupants were never shaken about on normal roads.

Oddments space was a bit limited with slender door bins, console trays and a shallow box between the front seats and some small compartments in the back. The long, low and wide boot could take a few suitcases and there is a ski-hatch from boot to cabin which may be useful for some.



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The big wheels and tyres produced tremendous grip and sharp responses to steering, throttle and brakes to inspire confidence in the BMW 420i M Sport capabilities. It simply went where it was pointed, without screeching tyres or wildly swinging tail.

The 2.0 litre engine has a long development history, sounds great and pulled very well even in Eco mode before booming a bit more through Comfort and into Sport settings.

The natural flowing roofline meant that rear visibility was a bit restricted and you relied on the parking sensors and reversing camera to avoid clipping anything but the intense headlights with strong washers and wipers were relaxing and effective, giving a strong sense of safety.

VERDICT

Competent and fun to drive.

For: Powertrain, economy, equipment, handling, steering and brakes, good driving modes

Against: Tight rear seats access and legroom, average boot with fixed seatbacks, slightly firm ride, limited rear visibility.



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FAST FACTS

Model: BMW 420i M Sport Coupé

Price: £52,888

Mechanical: 181 hp 4 cyl 2.0 twin turbo petrol, 8 speed auto

Max Speed: 149 mph



0 - 62 mph: 7.5 secs

Combined MPG: 39

Insurance Group: 30

C02 emissions: 147 g/km

Bik rating: 34%, £640FY, £620SRx5

Warranty: 3 years/ unlimited mileage

Size: L 4.77 m (15.65 ft), W 2.09 m (6.86 ft), H 1.39 m (4.56 ft)

Bootspace: 440 litres (15.54 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,525 kg (3,362 lb)