KIA Ceed 2 1.5T-GDi – Road Test

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The KIA Ceed 2 1.5T-GDi, Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency) found the Holy Grail for his road test…

To some motoring journalists the Holy Grail of a range is the entry-level model of any series.

Mentioned in price lists but rarely seen in showrooms or on the road, these starter models

are often just a price point to get into a sector and destined to become the model of choice in daily rental fleets.

Now, I had a former colleague who always bought the entry level model in a range he paid for with his own money and his argument, which is hard to contradict, was that the same engineering expertise and development expense has gone into the starter model as the range-topping, eye-watering and costly premium product in the line.

Essentially, he was right. So I was delighted when I found KIA UK had a Ceed 2 on its press fleet. I jumped at the chance to try it faster than you could say Monty Python.

There was nothing eccentric about the £22,565 KIA Ceed 2, 1.5T-GDi, or expensive for that matter, because the Korean car maker has been extremely astute assembling the equipment and package and delivering to market.



Launched in 2006 with the second generation appearing six years later, the current series appeared in 2018 so we currently have the mid-life revision of the third generation KIA Ceed at the beginning of 2023 which streamlined the range and reintroduced the GT-Line S at the same time.

Today's Ceed Hatchback line-up comprises of spec levels 2, GT-Line, 3, and GT-Line S which utilise the same 158 bhp 1.5 litre turbo-petrol engine, mostly with a 6 speed manual gearbox but offering a 7 speed automatic on the top version. Prices span the hatchback range from £22,565 to £31,765. All have Kia's desirable 7-years/100,000 miles warranty.

Grade '2' entry-level models are fitted with many features that are usually a cost option on rivals, including cruise control with speed limiter, air conditioning, an alarm system, front

wiper de-icer, electric windows all-round and automatic headlight control.

It has 16-inch alloy wheels, front fog lights, projection headlights, electrically adjustable and heated door mirrors in body colour, a high gloss black front grille, chrome window surrounds and LED rear lights.

Inside, there's black premium cloth seat trim, leather trimmed steering wheel, gearshift and hand brake and a rear centre armrest.

An 8.0-inch touchscreen audio-display along with a 4.2-inch driver's cluster display, reversing camera system with dynamic guidelines, DAB radio, Bluetooth with voice recognition and music streaming, together with Android Auto™ and Apple CarPlay™ smartphone compatibility with voice control complete the equipment.

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Safety features comprise Lane Keeping Assist (LKA), High Beam Assist (HBA), Driver Attention Warning (DAW) with Leading Vehicle Departure Warning, Hill Start Assist Control (HAC), and Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist – City/Pedestrian/Cyclist (FCA) as standard.

Those are impressive features, particularly in a modern car costing under £23,000.

The Smartstream engine in the Ceed Hatchback is one of a family which includes triple pot and six-cylinder versions, is very refined, smooth and when matched to the 6 speed manual gearbox proves remarkably economical, helped by its overdrive top three ratios.

Despite its responsiveness and ease of use the engine and gearbox on the test car was dogged with a particularly long travel clutch pedal which some might find difficult to use if they have smaller feet which are simply too short to roll back and fore on the mat but require lifting of the lower leg each time.

At the other side of the pedals, the throttle was ideally placed and light in action, initiating a

reasonable acceleration unless heavily loaded. The middle footbrake was very powerful and progressive with a drama-free ability to slow it quickly and squarely. A traditional handbrake also worked on the steepest slope.

I liked the weight and feel from the steering wheel and the Ceed 2 turned in a compact area so was easy to wiggle into the smallest space while not being vague when in a hurry. The camera system's reversing guidelines were very precise and did away with the need for sensors, but they would have been helpful on the front.

So the handling was surefooted with front struts and rear multi-link suspension set up and this has the benefit of a generally smoother ride over bad surfaces as well.



Certainly, the deeply padded front seats and reasonably supporting rear bench aided travel comfort but some in the back may have to pull in legs if taller people are infront. Headroom was good, not generous and those of a larger frame might find the apertures were restrictive when getting into the back. Front doors had wide openings and easier access.

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Excellent heating and ventilation controls separate to the infotainment display were well marked, easy to operate and highly effective with temperature, direction and output controls, backed up by four powered windows.

Secondary controls on the console, fascia, wheelspokes and column were clearly marked, worked with the lightest touch and were sensibly placed. Simple instruments were clear and the multi-display infront of the driver was easy to understand.

Visibility was very good through all windows with good wash/ wipe system both ends and fairly good headlights at night.

All noise levels were low or modest and the only intrusive source came from the suspension and tyres and that was not exceptional. Even the engine was muted when accelerating.

In performance terms the Ceed 2 is not going to set the road alight through the gears but it has a high top end to please German owners in particular.

The long-legged 4^{th}, 5^{th} and 6^{th} gears may not be ideal for rapid overtaking but they do make a big difference to the economy and we easily achieved 50 mpg overall and never saw it dip below 46 mpg on short trips.

The economy alone will satisfy many motorists but the overall refinement and price-point sophistication puts it in a class above.

VERDICT

Some might simply ask: Why pay more?

For: Highly economical, very smooth engine and gearchange, pleasant ride, fairly roomy, safe handling, long transferable warranty.

Against: Average performance, some road noise particularly long travel clutch, small rear door apertures.



FAST FACTS

Model: KIA Ceed 2 1.5T-GDi



Price: £22,565

Mechanical: 158 bhp, 4 cyl 1482cc turbo-petrol, 6 speed

Max Speed: 130 mph

0 – 62mph: 8.4 secs

Combined MPG: 50

Insurance Group: 14

CO2 emissions: 125 g/km

Tax costs: Bik rating 30%, VED £210FY, £180SR

Warranty: 7 years/ 100,000 miles

Size: L 4.32 m (14.17 ft), W 1.80 m (5.91 ft), H 1.45 m (4.76 ft)

Bootspace: 395 to 1291 litres (13.95 to 45.59 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,330 kg (2,932 lb)