Kia XCeed 1.4 T-GDi – Road Test

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THE NEW KIA XCEED 1.4 PETROL FIRST EDITION MODEL TEST DRIVEN.

Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency) tells all…

The Kia Ceed has been one of the outstanding success stories of the first two decades of the millennium and as we enter its third a new chapter begins with the XCeed soft SUV styled range of 2WD models.

Hatchbacks have given way to SUVs over the last ten years and now this sector is further developing with the full size models being joined by compact versions which do everything of their larger originators but sitting on a smaller platform. However, many only have 2WD traction so it could be a case of fashion over function.

This crossover design means the car makers can get more off a single platform, cutting

costs while also giving more choice to their customers and this efficiency had strong appeal to Kia which blends European design trends with Korean quality, dedication and engineering. The original Cee'd which went into production in Slovakia in 2006 developed with hatchback, coupé and estate versions, but the new third generation was conceived with a compact SUV in the line up as well, and it joined the range in Autumn 2019.

It shares the trend-setting seven years, 100,000 miles warranty of its stablemates and their extensive petrol or diesel engines with manual or automatic transmission from 1.0 to 1.6 litres, and they will be joined early 2020 by a plug-in hybrid with approx 35 miles pure-electric range before the low emissions 1.6 petrol engine cuts in.



Our test of the latest First Edition Kia XCeed covered the latest 138 bhp mid-range 1.4 litre T-GDi turbo petrol unit fitted with the optional seven-speed dual clutch sequential automatic transmission. All XCeed models have a 44 mm (1.73 in) higher ride height and revised

suspension design incorporating hydraulic rebound stoppers to combine a good ride with increased carrying capacity. Selectable economy or sporting responses are also provided, and all get Intelligent Stop & Go to stretch economy and lower emissions.



Space is the reason for creating the Kia XCeed and its boot space ranges from 426 litres (15.04 cu.ft) with the rear seats in place and up to 1,378 litres (48.66 cu.ft) with them folded down, roughly mid-way between the hatchback and station wagon. Internal oddments space is good for a family car as well.



It not only fulfils on space but with the suspension modifications and dynamic software fitted it also transforms from a practical family holdall to an edgier drive when wanted.

Kia has given the XCeed the high level safety and sophistication features from their range so it has a number of sensors, driver assist and warning systems when manoeuvring or on main roads and motorways, with data clearly displayed on large screens in front of the driver or over the central console. Switches come immediately to hand but some may find the deeply cowled main instruments on the small side and their marking could be clearer.

Major controls had a pleasant lightness and directness, with an easily selectable automatic lever for full or semi-automatic modes, very well weighted and adjustable steering, strong delightfully balanced brakes underfoot and a responsive throttle. You needed little effort to drive but felt well rewarded for your input.

I liked the straightforward air conditioning with its easy controls, direction and output, all backed up by powered windows and a sunroof in the First Edition.

The First Edition is always a good series from Kia, as you get a lot of equipment and in the XCeed's case a distinctive seat pattern to set it apart and start conversations with occupants.

Access was very good through the doors but during our test the powered fifth door failed and refused to properly lock down.

Inside there was plenty of room with well-shaped and supporting seats which offered good adjustment range on the front pair and excellent vision all round, with only a small blindspot over the shoulder when pulling into traffic. Lights and wipers did a good job both ends, the reversing camera was incredibly clear and the sensors had a good wide range.

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Ride comfort was good and it soaked up bumps and potholes with ease without throwing the XCeed off-line during cornering. Roll was well controlled and while it felt nose heavy at times it responded to throttle changes so it tightened a chosen line through a bend without any drama. Noise levels were modest and the most noticeable was that from the tyres over bad surfaces.

The response from the turbo petrol engine and gearbox was near instantaneous so there was hardly any lag when you wanted to overtake and the power flowed strongly and steadily but at other times it was also surprisingly flexible with imperceptible changes, which possibly explains the 46 mpg overall fuel consumption.

VERDICT

As the car market changes and becomes still more varied and challenging, the Kia XCeed and the 1.4 litre First Edition in particular is a strong competitor you cannot afford to

overlook.

For: Powertrain, economy, equipment, room, comfort, long warranty, soft SUV styling.

Against: Instruments may be difficult to read, some tyre noise, auto-boot closure failed during test, no 4WD models.



Mini Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Kia XCeed 1.4 T-GDi First Edition, Eco automatic, 2WD.

Price: £29,195.

Mechanical: Four cylinder, 138 bhp 1,353cc turbo petrol, seven speed automatic.

Performance: 124 mph, 0–62 mph 9.2 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 47.9 mpg (46 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 134g km, VED road tax £210 then £140 Standard rate, BIK company car tax 30%.

Insurance Group: 18A.

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,40 m (14.44 ft), W 1.83 m (6.00 ft), H 1.50 m (4.92 ft), boot space: 426 – 1,378 litres (15.04 – 48.66 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.