Kia XCeed PHEV – Road Test

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The Kia XCeed 1.6 GDI PHEV ‘3’ auto Crossover/SUV…

…Tried and tested by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

The all-new Kia XCeed PHEV is their strongest challenger yet to family car rivals.

The XCeed PHEV combines a powerful petrol-electric powertrain with very low emissions and ownership costs, quality fittings and finish embodied in a roomy Crossover cum SUV styled five-door hatchback body. It is the latest addition to the popular Slovakian-built Ceed series.

The XCeed Crossover is based on the better known Ceed platform but with different front and rear ends styling as well as a 42 mm (1.65 in) higher ride height. You still get just front wheel drive but can select a range of powertrains in the XCeed matched with various trim levels, and our 1.6GDI PHEV came with a 6-speed automatic transmission and '3' grade trim.

While it'll focus your attention with its taller appearance and latest LED lighting either end, big grille and tinted glass, inside there's a 10.25-inch floating touchscreen for most infotainment displays and very good equipment, including heated front seats and a host of driver aids to keep you safe, informed and in-charge.



The plug-in cables come for a domestic three-pin output and fast charge – when it takes a little over two hours to pack in the power compared to overnight at home. They are a good

length, very easy to connect and cannot be removed when the car's locked.

It's programmed to start on electric so long as there's enough in the 96-cells under the back seat and it silently pushes you along for over 36 miles before the petrol engine seamlessly steps in.

The Kia XCeed's regenerative charging works when cruising and braking so you may, like me, start out on a trip with say 28 miles range displayed but can increase this to 34 miles. It's all about courses for horses.



You can manually select what you want to use as well and this covers, auto, hybrid or electric modes, and if you ever need more power and providing the battery is charged, it will deliver a useful extra push for overtaking or coping with a heavy load aboard.

The on-board computer management system really does all the work and the driver enjoys the benefits. Up to a point.

The power output is good but not neck-snapping and I found it a bit slow off the mark and when overtaking with a load in the car, not helped by the gearbox's overdrive ratios on 4th, 5th and 6thwhich really help stretch economy but not acceleration on some occasions.

Driven within its best power band, the Kia XCeed PHEV does a good job and there's no complaint about its ability to cover the miles with ease and economically. Over several trips we saw various figures displayed from a low of 55 mpg to a high over 200 mpg but at the end of the week's testing it settled down to 88 mpg.



The access is excellent throughout, oddments provision reasonable while the boot space quickly expands with seats gradually dropped while the occupants get good support from cushions and backrests, and those in front have a huge adjustment range to explore.



The room is very good for five people and the driver will find all major and secondary controls fall immediately to hand or foot, with good feedback through the steering wheel, strong brakes and very smooth gearchanges whether fully automated or semi-manual.

Stalks carry a lot of functions so need familiarity and those on the wheel-spokes for comms and cruising work well.

Dials in front of the driver are simple and clear with a central info-panel to selectively choose a display of most used data. The big central touchscreen had a good readout display and was easy to use and the heating and ventilation did an excellent job backed up by the powered windows.

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Noises were low with the most constant being the tyre rumble and suspension movements, plus the engine sometimes when pushed, but wind or other mechanical noises were very low. Its ride and handling were comfortable and surefooted.

VERDICT

The Kia XCeed 1.6 GDI PHEV felt and looked like a much more expensive car, although its noticeably dearer than the equivalent regular Ceed so you have to carefully consider if you want to pay more for the Crossover look and a bit more overall room.

You will, however, save quite a bit of money in running and ownership costs and that may be the clincher in these tight times.

For: Roomy, refined, very economical, comfortable, excellent powertrain, good warranty, low cost ownership.

Against: Rear visibility, modest performance, some ride firmness on bad roads and only 2WD despite its Crossover/SUV styling.



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

Kia XCeed 1.6 GDI PHEV ‘3’ auto Crossover.

Price: £30,695.

Mechanical: 104 bhp, 4-cylinder, 1,580cc petrol GDI engine with 35 bhp electric motor, total of 265 Nm (195 lb.ft) of torque at 4,000rpm, 6-speed DCT auto gearbox.

Performance: 107 mph, 0 – 62 mph 10.4 seconds, Combined MPG on test 88.7 mpg including 36.6 miles battery power, CO2 emissions 32 g/km.

Tax costs: BiK company car tax rating 10%, VED road tax First Year £0, Standard rate £140.

Insurance Group: 18.

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/load space 291 to 1,378 litres (10.28 to 46.90 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.