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Latest Kia Ceed – Road Test

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More than a name change - The new Kia Ceed five door family hatchback

Tried and tested by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Formerly known as the Kia cee'd, the C-segment new generation five door hatchbacks are now known as Ceed. When first introduced in 2006 the car was given the name cee'd meaning Community of Europe with European Design to promote the fact that it was built and designed in Europe and produced in Slovakia. The lower case print style with its apostrophe was the marketing strategy to get the range recognised and remembered.



Over 1.3 million cee'ds were sold through the first two generation models, now the third generation Ceed is here. The outgoing cee'd accounted for 16% of Kia's European new car sales last year and in the UK it is the brand's third best selling range after the Sportage SUV and Picanto City Car. The new Ceed's five door hatchback range went on sale in the UK in August with 17 derivatives shown on the price list, based on three engine options, two transmissions and four trim lines. There is also a new Ceed Sportswagon estate with 13 variants listed

Prices for Ceed hatchbacks start from £18,295 and range up to £26,850. The new Ceed Sportswagon prices are £19,295 to £28,600. The former pro_ceed three door hatchbacks, although still on run-out sale, will not be replaced as a like-for-like models but in a new Shooting Brake configuration for sale early next year, it was announced at the recent Paris Motor Show. It was also announced the Ceed range will be extended to include GT-Line specification levels for all versions, again from early next year.

The current three engine options are all the latest EU 6.2d compliant which meet the new WLTP test procedure for more realistic fuel economy and CO2 emission figures. The petrol engine options are a revised 1.0 litre T-GDi (Turbocharged Gasoline Direct Injection) 118 bhp three cylinder unit and a new 1.4 T-GDi four cylinder unit which replaces the previous 1.6 T-GDi engine. The new unit produces 4% more power at 138 bhp despite its lower capacity and it has a wider torque band. There is also a new 1.6 litre CRDi common rail direct injection four cylinder turbodiesel engine with 114 bhp. Each engine is paired with a six-speed manual transmission, while the 1.4 T-GDi petrol and 1.6-litre CRDi diesel units are also available with Kia's seven-speed dual clutch automatic gearbox option.

The four trim and equipment levels are; '2', 'Blue Edition', '3' and 'First Edition'.

My new Ceed test car version had the new 1.4 T-GDi 139 bhp turbo petrol engine with the manual gearbox and was showcased with the top of the range First Edition specification, priced at £25,750. Like all Kia passenger cars the new Ceed is covered by their all-important seven years/100,000 miles warranty, which customers appreciate as it's



transferable between subsequent owners. Competitor models include the all-new Ford Focus, the new VW Golf, the older but still popular Vauxhall Astra, the roomy Skoda Octavia and Hyundai's i30 – but there are more.

Constructed on Kia's new K2 platform the Ceed is 20 mm (0.79 in) wider at 1,800 mm (5.91 ft) and 23 mm (0.91 in) lower at 1,447 mm (4.75 ft) than the outgoing version. With an overall length of 4,310 mm (14.14 ft) the wheelbase remains the same as before at 2,650 mm (8.69 ft) but the front overhang is 20 mm (0.79 in) shorter and the rear overhang is extended by 20 mm (0.79 in) helping to provide a larger 395 litre (13.95 cu.ft) boot. The dimension changes allow for more shoulder room in the rear, more headroom in the front and with a lower driving position. Styling wise straight lines replace the rounded-off edges of its predecessor with sculptured side panels and bonnet, a wider more refined 'tiger-nose' grille and lower air-intake grille. The standard fit LED daytime running lights have an 'ice cube' design which add to the new overall sharper and better proportioned and smart visual package, it looks more grown-up and mature.

Inside there is a noticeable improvement in the quality of the materials used with most trim surfaces being neat and soft-feel. The fit and finish looks really impressive and the doors close shut with a higher quality 'clunk' to them. The dashboard is laid out horizontally, being divided into an upper area with a centrally positioned floating touchscreen and infotainment system which is easy and logical to use. The lower level houses controls for audio, heating and ventilation, which thankfully do not have to be operated via the touchscreen. The centre console is angled slightly towards the driver's seat for ease of use. Depending on the spec level chosen there is a choice of metallic or satin chrome finished trim inserts and also a choice of cloth, cloth with faux leather seat bolsters or genuine leather upholstery. A leather wrapped steering wheel and gear stick are fitted as standard to all trim levels.

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The First Edition spec level of my test car was fully comprehensive but even the base '2'



level isn't exactly short of equipment either. First Edition specification includes 17-inch alloy wheels, rear spoiler, LED headlights with cornering function, LED rear lights, auto lights and wipers, electrically folding, adjustable and heated door mirrors, heated and fan ventilated front seats, 10-way adjustable driver's seat with memory function, leather upholstery, cruise control, dual automatic air-con, electric windows front and rear, 60/40 split folding rear seat backs, space saver spare wheel, 8-speaker premium sound system, Android Auto connectivity with voice control, 8.0-inch touchscreen with sat-nav, reversing camera, park assist for parallel and perpendicular parking with front and rear sensors, blind spot collision warning, lane keep assist, forward collision avoidance and a full set of front, side and curtain airbags. At first glance the £25,750 on-the-road price might seem a shade strong in this sector but the high specification and build-quality easily offsets that price and the level is all you need and more so there is no need to even think about adding more extra cost options.





So it looks good inside and out but how does it perform? Well it's a mid-sized family hatchback and it doesn't come up short in its competitive market sector. The new 1.4 litre, four cylinder direct-injection turbocharged petrol engine is quiet and refined and only sounds a shade on the harsh side at the top end of its rev-range, which due to the tall gearing, needs to be used at times. It produces 138 bhp but more importantly 242 Nm (178 lb.ft) of torque from just 1,500 rpm right up to 3,200 rpm. In the low to mid section of the powerband it is responsive for acceleration but for higher speed acceleration full use needs to be made of the gearbox. It becomes more relaxed once higher cruising speeds are reached in top gear. Top speed is 130 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 8.6 seconds. Perhaps there are marginally faster engines of a similar capacity on the market but in reality this new engines meets the needs of the vast majority of users in its market sector.



The engine doesn't fall short with fuel economy either. Officially in the new WLTP Combined



Cycle the figure is 48.7 mpg and for my week of driving the overall real-life figure was 44.3 mpg and just a reminder this is a petrol engine we are talking about. The CO2 figure is 132 g/km so VED First year road tax costs £205 before reverting to the £140 Standard rate. Company car drivers will pay 27% Benefit-in-Kind tax. However if you choose this engine with the seven-speed twin-clutch auto gearbox which costs an extra £1,100 over the manual version, the Combined Fuel economy figure is higher at 50.4 mpg, and the CO2 figure is lower at 127 g/km so First Year road tax goes down to £165 and BiK drops to 26%. However the auto's performance figures are a little poorer with a top speed of 128 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 8.9 seconds, too small to make much difference in driving performance so the added convenience of an auto gearbox holds no real penalties other than the extra purchase price.

No matter which version of the new Ceed is chosen a big plus for many users will be its ride comfort. It probably has the best compliant riding comfort of any car in its sector. That isn't to say it's the best handling, it isn't, but it is comfortable as shocks from potholes are minimised and it rides flat and level with minimal road noise intrusion. It is not as agile in the handling department as a Focus or Golf nor does the steering offer the same precise feedback to the driver but I'd opt for Ceed's ride comfort anytime over a hard-riding, tiring to travel in family hatchback for most everyday journeys whether its leisure or work travel.

VERDICT

Overall the new Ceed is a very good, well-rounded, well-equipped impressive package and certainly it's been added to my 'recommended' list of new cars in its sector.

For: Smart new looks, better balanced exterior proportions, high quality interior, very well equipped, comfortable ride, relatively roomy, good real-life fuel economy, long warranty.

Against: Dull steering response with little feedback to the driver, lacks handling agility at higher speeds on winding roads, tall gearing requires lots of gearchanges for winding open road travel.



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

New Kia Ceed 1.4 T-GDi, First Edition, manual, 5-door family hatchback.

Price: £25,750.

Engine/transmission: New 1.4 litre, four cylinder turbocharged direct injection petrol, 138 bhp, 242 Nm (178 lb.ft) of torque from 1,500 rpm, six speed manual.



Performance: 130 mph, 0-62 mph 8.6 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 48.7 mpg (44.3 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 132 g/km, VED First Year road tax £205 then £140 Standard rate, BiK company car tax 27%.

Insurance Group: 20.

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,310 mm (14.14 ft), W 1,800 mm (5.91 ft), H 1,447 mm (4.75 ft), wheelbase 2,650 mm (8.69 ft) boot/load space 395 to 1,291 litres (13.95 to 45.59 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,000 kg (2,204 lb).