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Latest Kia XCeed – Road Test

Published: January 6, 2020

Author: David Miles

Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/latest-kia-xceed-road-test/>



NEW KIA XCEED ADDS TO THE BRAND'S RECORD SALES MODEL LINE-UP...

...explains David Miles (Miles Better News Agency)

So what is the new Kia Xceed? Well it's the latest member of the Ceed C segment family but it's a completely new model, not simply a rebrand of the Ceed five-door hatchback, Ceed Sportswagon estate

and the newer ProCeed Shooting brake models.

The Ceed family of models is Kia's third best-selling model range after the Kia Sportage mid-sized SUV and the Picanto Picanto city car. The Ceeds in their various forms account for around 10% of Kia's total annual new car sales and the extensive range of models reached



another record breaking total in 2019 with 97,323 new car sales, an increase of 1.63% in a new car market down by an overall 2.37%. That's individually more than Citroën, Peugeot, Renault, SEAT, Skoda, Hyundai, Honda, MINI, Nissan and Volvo, to name just a few of the popular mid-volume selling brands.

In short the XCeed, which like other Ceeds is designed, engineered and built in Europe, is a family hatchback with a steeply forward raked tailgate combined with Crossover/SUV styling; it has a raised 42 mm (1.65 in) ride height but it is only a front wheel drive model with no 4WD options.



It is currently available with an eight model range based on four engines, two transmissions



and three trim and equipment levels. On-the-road prices start from £20,795 and run up to £29,195.

The four engines on offer so far are turbo petrol 1.0 litre T-GDi 118 bhp and 1.4 T-GDi 138 bhp and turbodiesel units are both 1.6 litre CRDi with either 114 or 134 bhp power outputs. All manual gearbox models have a six speed unit and the auto option is a seven speed DCT dual clutch unit. The auto option is available with the 1.4 T-GDi petrol engine and all engines have Kia's ISG stop/start function.

The trim and equipment levels are Grade '2', Grade '3' and 'First Edition' but their availability is dependent on the engine chosen.

The XCeed shares the same platform and wheelbase as the Ceed hatchback but the front and rear overhangs are extended over the hatchback versions by 25 mm (0.98 in) at the front and 60 mm (2.36 in) at the rear and the ride height is raised by approximately 42 mm (1.65 in), depending on the spec. The only body panels carried over from the five door hatchback are the front doors.

Its most noticeable styling change is the steeply-angled fastback tailgate and the spoiler which extends from the roof's trailing edge, and which sits 60 mm (2.36 in) higher than the hatch version. To the side, to give it that SUV/Crossover look, are black plastic wheelarch and side sill protection strips. At the front is a more prominent version of the familiar Kia family face with the XCeed having a bolder grille, larger lower air intake, new shape headlights with the Ceed's signature 'ice-cube' LED lights. These are topped by slim indicators lights that flow back over the wheelarches, and it's the same at the rear with the taillights and slim indicator LED spearing towards the rear shoulders of the vehicle. There are sculptured styling lines running across the tailgate giving a wider and more pronounced appearance and the sculptured panels continue along the sides as well. Front and rear skid plates complete the Crossover/SUV look, which is mostly cosmetic.



Inside it's very much the same as other Ceed family members with a sculptured fascia and centre console all aimed at making it a driver-focussed cabin. There is ample use of seemingly high quality soft touch trim materials, all well put together and the layout is simple and easy to live with. There is an 8.0-inch or 10.25-inch 'floating' touchscreen, depending on the spec level, mounted high up on the dashboard.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

In the rear the longish wheelbase gives ample rear seat legroom for teenagers and



potentially adults and the rear seat backs fold to extend the boot from 426 to 1,378 litres (15.04 to 48.66 cu.ft). There is nothing really different or remarkable about the interior design, its typical Kia, well thought out, practical, of good quality and, with its seven year/100,000 mile warranty, thoroughly serviceable.

My biggest gripe was the lack of an integrated sat-nav for my Grade '2' spec test model, such a waste of a smart and easy touchscreen. You have to order a Grade '3' or First Edition spec level to get an integrated sat-nav system which uses the 10.25-inch display. Below those levels you have to connect the mapping system via your smartphone, completely non user-friendly but becoming a more common occurrence on some non-premium brands these days.

Standard equipment does include High Beam Assist, Driver Attention Warning, Lane Keep Assist, Forward Collision Warning and Forward Collision Avoidance for town/city driving. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone compatibility are standard as is a reversing camera with dynamic guidelines which was most useful given the restricted rear view vision due to the steeply sloping tailgate window. Aluminium alloy wheels, electric windows and air-con are all standard equipment.



Under the bonnet of my XCeed test car with its Grade '2' spec level was the 1.0 litre, three cylinder, T-GDi petrol engine. This turbocharged EU6 compliant unit uses direct injection petrol technology and produces 118 bhp at 6,000 rpm and 172 Nm (127 lb.ft) of torque from 1,500rpm. It's a gruff sounding unit, eager to rev but you need to keep the revs in its powerband to keep it moving. Let the engine revs drop below 1,500 rpm and progress is very limited and it takes a while before the turbocharger spins up with enough rpm to get the engine back into action. So get used to plenty of gearchanging to keep this unit in its optimum performance range. Fortunately the six speed manual gearbox is a delight to use, light and precise gearchanges were easy - but the 4th to 6th gears are all overdrive ratios to

maximise fuel efficiency and this increased the number of gearchanges needed during open road driving conditions, especially for overtaking slow traffic. A one gear drop wasn't enough at times; a drop of two ratios at least to build up overtaking speed was needed, especially if the car was loaded.



Top speed is 115 mph with the zero to 60 mph acceleration time of 10.9 seconds. Good enough but not as good or as refined as Ford's or VW's 1.0 litre triple-pot turbo petrol units. The WLTP Combined Cycle fuel economy figure is 45.6 mpg for the Grade '2' spec and my overall test drive figure for a period of longer and shorter trips was 44.3 mpg. The CO2 figure is 124 g/km so First Year VED road tax costs £170 followed by the £145 Standard rate charge. Company car drivers pay 28% Benefit-in-Kind tax, insurance is Group 15E and



the warranty is an excellent seven years/100,000-miles.

VERDICT

That's the nuts and bolts of my time with the XCeed, nothing really to fault it, some good bits like the warranty, the Crossover/SUV styling is nothing to get excited about, it's a hatchback with a sloping rear tailgate and bodywork protection strips around the wheelarches and sills. The ride is compliant although impacts from potholes are too obvious inside the cabin and

on poorer road surfaces the rear end of the car tended to fidget about with the wheels drawn to depressed lines in the tarmac caused by heavy traffic.

So the XCeed is good in parts, average in other areas and at around £1,945 more expensive than the 1.0 litre T-GDi five door hatchback with the same Grade '2' spec so I'd stick with the more practical load area hatch model.

For: Popular for some potential owners who desire the Crossover/SUV styling based on a family hatchback, reasonable running costs, excellent warranty, you could save around £2k and buy the similar Ceed hatchback with the same spec and engine.

Against: Styling is rather contrived, limited rear view visibility through the tailgate window, only 2WD versions for this pseudo Crossover model, fidgety ride control, no integrated sat-nav apart from high spec models.



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

Kia XCeed Grade '2' 1.0 T-GDi 118 bhp, manual, family Crossover Hatchback.

Price: £20,795.

Engine/transmission: 1.0 litre, three cylinder turbocharged direct injection petrol, 118 bhp, 172 Nm (127 lb.ft) of torque from 1,500 rpm, six speed manual, 2WD.



Performance: 115 mph, 0-60 mph 10.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 45.6 mpg (44.3 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 124 g/km, VED £170/£145, BiK company car tax 28%.

Insurance Group: 15E.

Warranty: Seven years/100,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,395 mm (14.42 ft), W 1,826 mm (5.99 ft), H 1,483 mm (4.87 ft), wheelbase 2,650 mm (8.69 ft), boot/load space 426 to 1,378 litres (15.04 to 48.66 cu.ft), braked towing weight 1,200 kg (2,646 lb), five doors/five seats.