

Fact File

SsangYong
Korando Sport
Engine: 2.0 turbo
diesel
Power: 155BHP
Max braked trailer
weight: 2300kg
Warranty: 60
months
Combined miles per
gallon: 37.7
Transmission: six
speed manual
Insurance: 6E
CO2 g/km: 199

THE school run; is there anything trickier? Time it perfectly and it's a pleasant start to the day as you set junior along his long road to learning and have a nice chat with mums and dads at the gate.

Get it wrong and it's as stressful as landing a jumbo in gale force winds. Miss your window by minutes and the drive-through, drop-off car park is packed to the gunwales.

You can't leave your car in the road because the locals hurtle by and your five-year-old is random to say the least.

So you have to take to the grass, which requires bumping up a kerb and dropping into ruts carved in the turf by previous latecomers. Not good.

If I was in a conventional car I would now be stuck fast and face the ignominy of having to ask for a tow from the groundsmen. But I'm not, I'm in SsangYong's new Korando Sport and it's a doozy.

Simply switch from two wheel drive to four wheel and Sport reverses out of the trenches on tickover with no wheelspin and no fuss. It's impressive. This isn't always the case and I once got beached on wet grass in a big SUV, all wheels spinning merrily as the 4x4 sank deeper into the mud.

The Korando doesn't hesitate and if it had I still would have had the option of using the low ratio box and diff lock that make it virtually unstoppable. This is the real thing not some wannabe off-roader.

Oh and did I mention, the Sport is a pick-up to boot, though

it is so refined and sophisticated you tend to forget.

With the large tailgate all safely boxed in the SsangYong is a big old boy. But it is surprisingly easy to handle thanks to reverse parking sensors and the fact the back end is nice and square. So when you are travelling backwards you can judge by the rear window as there's only the tow-bar sticking out beyond that.

It is also as easy to drive as an SUV with a superb diesel that is both powerful and smooth, a decent six speed gearbox and car-like ergonomics. The cabin is draped in leather, there's a natty Garmin satnav, Bluetooth and a Kenwood hi-fi. The leather seats are even heated in the front, how's that for posh?

Gone are the days when pick-ups came luxury-free and were hard on your senses. Today the long travel suspension, quiet cabin and plethora of toys make them as easy to live with as any upmarket 4x4.

Bowling along the A1 the Korando is a good sport offering relaxed motoring and 30+ economy. It is also made for the hills and dales because the strong engine is perfectly suited to the gearbox, which makes for efficient, smooth and pleasant progress.

This SsangYong will pretty much handle any eventuality. It's as at home in the dirt as on the asphalt, it's happy in town and motorway and it's definitely tough enough to survive the playground. What more could you ask for?

By Ian Lamming

No ordinary



Wannabee