



Vauxhall Corsa (2006 - 2014)

Boy Racer

First impression | The new Vauxhall Corsa loves to sprint. Since its introduction at the end of 2006, the car has been number one on sale lists across Europe. Now the Corsa is going to be running that little bit faster, as Vauxhall has introduced the VXR version. This small Corsa has just been fitted with a massive engine.

192hp/230 Nm: that's all the experts need to know. These are the sorts of figures more usually associated with much larger business cars. Such engine power in a car this size is going to cause a bit of a stir.

Vauxhall has emphasised that the Corsa VXR is much more than a performance car. Without any seconds thought at all, anyone can put a large engine into a small car. However, it is a lot more difficult to make use of that engine power. That's why various adaptations had to be made to the Corsa VXR. It was then tested and fine-tuned by a team of race-drivers.

To start with the chassis has been lowered by 15 mm which in turn has lowered the car's centre of gravity. The suspension and the exhaust have been adjusted. The Corsa VXR is now driving on 225/40R18 tyres (22.5 cm wide, 18 inch alloys) kept in control by extra large (16 inch) the brake disks. Also steering now is more direct.



WYSIWYG

Spoilers both front and rear, air intakes from top to bottom and a real live diffuser under the rear bumper ensure that the Corsa VXR doesn't take off at high speed. On top of everything else, these additions give the car a very sporty appearance.

The Corsa VXR is not some two-faced car; super-fast with an otherwise very civilised appearance. The VXR screams from the rooftops. Wide beam lights, a thick triangular exhaust, darkened rear lights and gills in the bumpers finish it off entirely. These aren't options or adaptations for the photo shoot, the Corsa VXR is beautifully kitted out like this as standard. A real case of What You See Is What You Get.



The interior has undergone substantial adaptations. Most striking are the large sports seats which are even more comfortable than they look. These Recaro seats completely hug the whole body giving a feeling of safety (incorporated side-airbags increase this). It does mean, however, that the (leg) room in the rear has been reduced.

The uncomfortably large sports steering wheel has been flattened at the bottom, with a line across it so that those boy racers still know where the neutral position is during a moment of passion. The central console is finished in a black shiny lacquer. On every empty spot there are VXR logos, from the gear stick to the door lintels. It gives the car such a special feeling that the Corsa VXR even feels exciting in the showroom!



As a top model from the Corsa line, the VXR is also kitted out at a top spec. Climate control system, Bluetooth connectivity, light and rain sensors, cruise-control and adaptive forward lighting are all standard. The standard radio (with MP3 compatibility) is moderate in its sound quality. However, the loudspeakers have been placed in such a way that the sound is quite chaotic. What really is missing however are indicators for the oil temperature and turbo pressure. This you would expect to see in a car of this type, even if it was for display purposes only.

Driving

More important than the exterior appearance of the car is of course its performance. The 1.6 litre four cylinder engine which is also used in other Vauxhalls is from where the power stems. With the addition of a turbo, this engine can now produce 192 hp, which you won't find in many other Vauxhalls.



With its considerable engine capacity, there is sufficient power even with low revs. If so desired, sixth gear can be used at 50 km/hr while the Corsa is still going at 1,200 revs per minute. This does require a considerable amount of self control, as the Corsa VXR is great fun.

For this particular test, a race-track run was organised. Time to throw caution to the wind! The Corsa moves off exceedingly quickly, within 7.2 seconds it has reached 100 km/hr. Because the turbo engine delivers not only a lot of horse power but also a lot of Newton metres, there is always so much more. The traditional dash from 80 to 120 km/hr in fifth gear takes 6.7 seconds. 150 km/hr is comparable to a stroll in the park and at this speed it is possible to cover fairly considerable distances relatively calmly.

Flooring the accelerator, the engine momentarily delivers an overboost, which means that for ten seconds there is not the usual 230 Nm but a whooping 266 Nm. On a straight road the top speed of more than 200 km/hr can be achieved without a problem. When accelerating, there is an awe-inspiring noise from the engine. Shifting down a gear produces a wonderful grumbling sound from the exhaust (accelerating to the limit of the RPM controller produces the same sound effect).

Brake test

At the end of a straight run, the brake test is even more impressive than the original sprint. Within a staggeringly short distance, the Corsa is stationary. Its

brakes are very sensitive. As a result, the deceleration is massive before ABS kicks in and before the car nose dives.

In turns, the Corsa VXR barely dives, rolls or inclines. With the engine in front and the power on the front wheels, the Corsa VXR is not your traditional textbook example of the perfect sports car. The front is now the heaviest part of the car with the front wheels having to power and steer at the same time. Usually this would result in the steering trying to wrench free during acceleration and slide straight out over the front wheels when turning through a sharp bend (under-steering).

It is evident that Vauxhall has done a lot more than just souped up this Corsa. So long as the road surface is in good condition, the front wheels have absolutely no problem with this large engine capacity. It is almost impossible to unbalance the Corsa. It is more than capable of taking bends at particularly high speeds. Although the performance isn't that of a sports car, the sensation is certainly comparable to that level.



If the Corsa driver pushes the limits too far, the Electronic Stability Programme (ESP) nevertheless intervenes albeit after sufficient playtime. As a result, the speeds through turns are constantly increasing slightly, as the car's limits become more evident. On the test circuit, the Corsa VXR is more than capable of showing how much fun it is. You keep on wanting to go around just one more time!

Conclusion

From the very first moment, the new Vauxhall Corsa has been a sales success story. The Corsa VXR has everything to ensure the same success in the sports segment. With these adaptations, the Corsa VXR has become so much more than just another souped-up car. All the sport elements have been carefully brought together.

The Corsa VXR has not only a lot of engine power, but is capable of releasing it in the right way. The road handling and brakes are the best in its class. The Corsa VXR doesn't just look sporty; it is also more aero dynamical than the ordinary Corsa. This boy racer makes the Corsa an even quicker sprinter than it already was. ■



Specifications

Vauxhall Corsa (2006 - 2014) VXR 1.6i 16v Turbo

Size and weight



Length x width x height	404 x 171 x 149 cm
Wheelbase	251 cm
Kerb weight	1.203 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	45 l
Luggage space	285/1050 l
Tyre size	225/40R18

Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	192 PS @ 5800 rpm
Max torque	230 Nm @ 1980 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	7.2 secs
Top speed	225 km/h
Average mileage	7.9 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	10.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	190 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 15,625
Price base model	Â£ 7,495