'Test drive' checklist - the 13 things to check

☐ Is your driving position at the wheel comfortable? Can the seat slide, rise and tilt? Can you adjust the steering wheel position? Can you see all the mirrors and through the windows?

☐ If you’ll be fitting a child car seat, will this go in easily? Or if you need to carry large items such as golf clubs, will they fit?

☐ Try different routes. You should include the motorway if you’ll be driving on this.

☐ Do an emergency stop on an empty road to double check the brakes. Try the handbrake on a hill and listen for any unusual rattling or banging sounds.

☐ Check that the brakes and clutch function smoothly and effectively. Plus do a three-point turn to check for play in the steering.

☐ Does it veer? Is the car veering, or does it feel balanced?

☐ Bonnet, doors and boot. Are the bonnet, doors and boot easy to open?

☐ What's the passenger space like? Will people be comfortable on a long journey?

☐ Boot space. If you’re likely to be carrying heavy or bulky items, will it be easy to lift them into the boot?
Is it smooth? Does the car pull away smoothly?

What's the power like? Is it powerful enough to pull away from traffic lights and to keep going up hills without requiring endless gear changes?

What's the engine noise like? Are there any irritating rattles or buzzes?

Check the suspension. How well does it soak up bumps and take corners?