



£500 JUNIOR ROAD BIKE

WORX JA26

Junior road bikes are enjoying something of a renaissance. *Adam Coffman* and daughter *Mia* tried one from online retailer Worx

WORX are a newcomer to the cycling scene, having been selling bikes online since 2013. They make road, cyclo-cross and track bikes for adults, as well as a junior range in three sizes: 24-inch wheel, 26-inch (tested) and 700C. Like Islabikes' drop-bar bikes, the children's ones are lightweight, cyclo-cross style multi-purpose machines.

My 11-year-old daughter Mia tested the mid-sized JA26. It was her first experience of riding on the road with a dropped handlebar. I expected the transition from her flat-barred hybrid to a bike with drops to prove something of a challenge. But the JA26's handling is stable, and the sizing gives a comfortable riding position.

The styling is bold, modern and quite different from what you normally see on a child's bike. These bikes look like miniature adult bikes rather than the bikes that are normally sold for children. Mia said that she felt like she was riding a 'cool, grown-up bike' – perhaps other manufacturers should take note?

LOW WEIGHT, LOW GEARING

There is a high level of attention to detail throughout. The cranks are sensibly short, at 155mm; the handlebar has a child-friendly width and drop; and the 13-32 cassette makes sense, providing gears at the bottom end at the expense of an 11-tooth small

sprocket that kids seldom need. (Even if they race, small sprockets are sometimes prohibited due to gear-size restrictions.) There are eyelets for a rack and mudguards.

The bike weighs only 8.75kg and the Kenda road tyres have little rolling resistance. Mia found it quick on the flat and much easier than heavier bikes uphill.

Many of the components are Worx branded. The hubs and bottom bracket have decent cartridge bearings, and they spin smoother and quieter than is usual on kids' bikes. The auxiliary brake levers on the top of the handlebar give confidence to young cyclists who are graduating from flat bars.

Overall, this is a well-designed and well-built bike for children who want drop handlebar bike either for racing (cyclo-cross or road) or for longer, challenging rides in the country. Mia's verdict: 'It is as light as a feather and is beautiful to ride.' ●



Tech Spec

WORX JA26

PRICE: £495

WEIGHT: 8.75kg

SIZE: Suits rider with 60cm-plus inside leg (approx age, 9-plus)

FRAME & FORK: Double-budded 6061-T6 aluminium with fittings for mudguards, rear rack, 1 bottle

WHEELS: 25-559 Kenda Kontender tyres (Schwalbe CX tyres available), double-wall aluminium rims, 32x3 spokes, Worx WRT cartridge hubs

TRANSMISSION: Flat pedals, Worx 155mm chainset with 32T chainring and chainring guards, Sram 9-speed 13-32T cassette. Microshift 9-speed shifter and rear derailleurs. 9-speed, 24-59 inches

BRAKING: Tektro Oryx cantilevers with auxiliary levers

STEERING & SEATING: All by Worx, including 34cm width shallow-drop bar

CONTACT: worxbikes.com

Also available



ISLABIKES LUATH 26 £399.99

The pioneers of lightweight quality kids' bikes, Islabikes are well designed, good value, very popular, and hold their value secondhand.

islabikes.co.uk



GENESIS COL DU GLANDON £599

650B-wheel junior bike with 35mm tyres, 16-speed Shimano Claris gearing, and a full complement of mudguard and rack mounts.

genesisbikes.co.uk